CANADIAN URBAN INSTITUTE
L'INSTITUT URBAIN DU CANADA

COMMUNITY COUNCILS AND NEIGHBOURHOOD COMMITTEES:

LESSONS FOR OUR COMMUNITIES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Prepared by:
Eudora Pendergrast, Associate
John Farrow, President

CANADIAN URBAN INSTITUTE
30 St. Patrick St., 6th Floor
Toronto, ON M5T 3A3
tel: 416-598-1606
fax: 416-598-5145

ISBN: 1-895446-17-1

Community Councils and Neighbourhood Committees:
Lessons For Our Communities

Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data

Pendergrast, Eudora S.
Community Councils And Neighbourhood Committees:
Lessons For Our Communities From Around The World

Includes bibliographical references.
ISBN: 1-895446-17-1

1. Community organization. 2. Neighbourhood government.
I. Farrow, John, 1943-. II. Canadian Urban Institute.
III. Title.

JS241.P46 1997 320.8 C97-931459-3

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Initiatives in Ontario, which involve the consolidation of municipal governments, have raised questions about the relationships between local councils and the citizens they represent. In this context, proposals for Hamilton-Wentworth and Metro Toronto have introduced the terms "community council" and "neighbourhood committee" in order to describe two community-based mechanisms for identifying and addressing local issues and priorities in the context of restructured municipalities. To assist in understanding these two concepts, the Canadian Urban Institute has undertaken a research study to examine how and to what extent such mechanisms have been used in other local jurisdictions around the world.

Research Has Confirmed The Need For Definitions

The terms "community council" and "neighbourhood committee" have different meanings in different places. The following definitions describe how the terms are used in this research:

- A ***community council*** is defined as a geographically-based (as opposed to functionally-based) committee of council comprised of the councillors elected from a defined area within the municipality. The functions of a ***community council*** may be advisory and/or decision-making, but in any case are delegated to it by the city and/or by legislation enacted by a higher level of government.

- A ***neighbourhood committee*** is defined as a local citizens organization which:

    (i) is recognized as representing a defined neighbourhood or local community of interest;

    (ii) is formally given specific advisory and/or consultative responsibilities by the municipal council;

    (iii) may have responsibility for taking specified actions on behalf of council; and

    (iv) may be recognized as a forum for consultation regarding the interests of the area's inhabitants.

The following observations help to further clarify the differences between the two mechanisms:

- Community councils provide an area-based structure for enhancing access to and increasing the accountability of elected politicians. They are not a mechanism for increasing the number of direct participants in the local government.

- Neighbourhood committees increase the number of direct participants in local government, and, in doing so, are a means to empower citizens.

Scope of Research

The research involved a search of the academic literature in order to identify jurisdictions which had experience with similar mechanisms, or other innovative concepts. A short list was then selected for more detailed research and interviews, taking into account the Ontario context.. The initial findings were summarized and discussed in workshops held in Hamilton, Metro Toronto and York Region. The analysis was then completed and is summarized in this report.

The cities investigated as case studies include Edmonton, Halifax, Winnipeg, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, Portland, Amsterdam, Paris and Christchurch.

Two New Themes Underlay Much Of The Debate On The Relationship Between Government And The Community

Two significant and inter-related themes affecting the relationship between government and community appeared in various forms in all of the cities we examined. Because these themes, and the debates associated with them, are so pervasive, they will undoubtedly continue to affect future discussions concerning restructuring and the roles of community-based governance in Ontario's restructured municipalities.

The first of these themes, the "re-inventing government" movement, is based on the now familiar axiom that governments should "steer and not row." This general precept--i.e., that governments should be "enablers" rather than "providers" of services--is associated with deregulation, reductions in the size of government and government spending, and the devolution of responsibility for programs both from upper to lower levels of government, and from government to the private and volunteer sectors. The second theme, which might be termed the "rediscovering community" movement, is related to the first, but is more strongly linked to traditions of community empowerment and participatory democracy.

Participants In The Workshops Provided Comments On Community Councils And Neighbourhood Committees

Five workshops were held with a cross section of citizens and a significant number of these were members of a variety of citizens' organizations. The comments recorded at the workshops are not a representative sampling of public opinion; however, they do provide insight into a number of issues and indicate the breadth of opinion on the topics discussed. Some of the key matters raised at the workshops are as follows:

- The need to make participation efficient, effective and rewarding for volunteers and concerned citizens was a consistent theme at all sessions.

- Those most interested in the concept of community councils were specifically interested in what powers the community councils would have in an amalgamated structure. The view expressed by a number of participants was that where an amalgamation of municipalities had occurred these powers should correspond as closely as possible to the powers of existing local municipalities.

- The view was expressed that community councils should be able to formulate policy, and not be limited to advising on local issues and monitoring local service delivery.

- Several participants were concerned that community councils (and neighbourhood committees) sounded like another level of government.

- There was a suggestion that the existing city halls be maintained as locations for community council meetings. In this context, several people commented on the difficulty of having to travel to downtown Toronto to attend committee and council meetings.

- There was interest in citizen participation and community empowerment initiatives in other cities. However, there was also skepticism about the effectiveness of neighbourhood committees which rely on volunteers who are often already over-committed in terms of time and energy.

- The need to replace or supplement existing citizen associations through the introduction of neighbourhood committees was questioned.

- One participant had done a study which found that participants in Metro resident and ratepayer associations were disproportionately white, middle-class homeowners, and felt that this issue would have to be addressed if neighbourhood committees were to become a more formal part of the governance structure. This point was acknowledged by several different participants. The concern was that such groups are typically motivated by the desire to protect property rights and neighbourhood amenities.

- One participant noted that neighbourhood committees in other cities are frequently concerned with social justice and equity issues, and questioned to what extent existing residents and community groups currently address these issues.

- There were questions and discussion related to the need to involve residents of less affluent areas, immigrants and non-English-speaking neighbourhoods. Techniques for involving new Canadians were suggested and discussed.

- There was recognition and discussion of the fact that middle class homeowners are able to raise funds to fight property-related battles at city council and the OMB, while poorer citizens and those less confident of their place in the community for other reasons did not have these kinds of private resources to draw on.

- Representatives from poorer neighbourhoods expressed concerns about funding and the capacity to address a multitude of issues.

- There was a strong sense that elected and salaried councillors and staff should be responsible for ensuring that neighbourhood interests are understood and respected.

- Concern was expressed about neighbourhoods with no residents or other community associations. Some thought they should be helped; others thought such neighbourhoods would organize themselves when the time was right.

- The need for neighbourhood committees to be accountable to all members of the area represented was raised, and questions were posed regarding effective techniques for ensuring that the interests of everyone in an area covered by a neighbourhood committee were recognized and represented.

- There were questions about the extent to which neighbourhood committees received funding in the U.S. and elsewhere. One participant stated that any level of funding allocated to a neighbourhood association or committee was sufficient to make the organization a level of government. Some favoured funding, others strongly opposed it.

Community Councils

While neighbourhood committees are an increasingly widespread phenomenon in North America, Europe and elsewhere. Community councils are unusual and the concept has been implemented in only in a few locations, almost all of them in Canada. Winnipeg and Halifax are the key examples examined in the study.

Based on the research, community councils, where established, are intended to achieve the following:

- decentralized forums for addressing issues of concern to individual communities within a municipality, where members of the community can address their particular councillors on these matters, rather than having to appear before a functional committee of council dealing issues from across the city;

- decentralized decision-making on issues whose impact does not extend beyond the boundaries of the community;

- recognition of different interests, concerns and levels of service among different communities within a municipal government;

- promotion of a sense of community identity, through interactions among community members, and between the community and its elected representatives, on issues of local concern; and

- increased ability to collectively explore and define community positions on city-wide issues.

The Research Identified Three Alternative Models For Community Councils

The Local Community of Interest Model: This model is based on the establishment of area-based committees of council comprised of the councillors elected from separate communities, with the communities being defined on the basis of shared interests and local identity, and not municipal boundaries. Because one of the primary reasons for establishing community councils of this type is to promote community access to and accountability of elected councillors, it is important that the community councils relate to identifiable communities. A minimum number of three councillors is desirable to minimize the possibility of tie votes.

The Amalgamated Municipal Federation Model: This model is intended to describe a situation where a two tier system has been consolidated into an amalgamated, single tier municipality, with the boundaries of "old" lower tier municipalities preserved as boundaries for committees of council termed community councils. Bill 103 follows this model.

The Radical Decentralization Model: This model is based on local government decentralization initiatives in the United Kingdom, and specifically the initiative pursued in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. This model involves a radical application of the principle of subsidiarity to a municipal context and is based on the devolution of all functions that can be devolved without completely eliminating the municipal council.

The data on the application of any of these models in a pure form is limited. The most complete information, on the application of the Amalgamated Municipal Federation Model is from Winnipeg and Halifax. However, a number of hybrid approaches have been identified and observations have been drawn together from a variety of jurisdictions, applications and experiences.

Key Findings Concerning Community Councils

- Area-based committees of council comprised of councillors are unusual, and are virtually unknown outside of Canada.

- Community councils in Winnipeg appear to no longer to function effectively, and a number of matters, that they dealt with initially, have been shifted to a Board of Adjustment or delegated to staff, working in consultation with the ward councillor. The situation in Halifax appears to be more promising, but is still relatively untested.

- The absence of functional standing committees of council, as is the case in Halifax, where the entire council meets as a committee of the whole to deal with functional issues, appears to enhance the usefulness and effectiveness of community councils.

- In a situation, such as Toronto, where a commitment has been made to six community councils, careful deliberation is needed on how community councils and functional standing committees will interface, as there is a risk of creating a confusing and convoluted decision-making process.

- Community councils and area ratings appear to provide useful mechanisms for addressing the provision of different levels of services to rural and urban communities within a single municipality. However, the use of area ratings in Halifax has proved to be more difficult to implement than anticipated.
- Because they are largely advisory, have no taxing power and have limited responsibilities, community councils are not comparable in terms of decision-making power to the lower tier of government in a metropolitan system.
- To be effective, the scope of the issues dealt with by a community council should be appropriate to the size of the area represented. If they only deal with matters considered trivial, the public, politicians and staff will lose interest in them.
- In communities where citizen organizations and neighbourhood associations are not well-established or supported, or in rural areas where large distances between homes makes neighbourhood organizations difficult to maintain, community councils may provide a valuable forum for the expression of local issues and concerns.
- There is difficulty in including major commercial districts or other areas of regional significance within a community council district, since matters which arise in these areas are of interest to the entire municipality. This issue has arisen in Halifax, where it is argued that the downtown is of interest to all Haligonians, not just those who live and work there.
- In large municipalities, with a generally consistent level of urbanization and wards with large populations represented by a single councillor, it is not clear that the creation of community councils adds value to the political process that could not be achieved by the councillor and his/her staff working with accountable neighbourhood committees.

The New City Of Toronto Is Faced With Important Decisions Concerning Community Councils

The legislation permits the new Toronto City Council to change the boundaries and number of community councils, or to abolish them altogether, with the proviso that all parts of the new city must either be represented by a community council, or that none should be. Furthermore, the new council has the option of further empowering the community councils through the enactment of procedural bylaws. For example, the new council could require a two thirds vote to override a recommendation from a community council. Therefore, it appears that the new City Council has the following options regarding implementation of community councils:

1: Increase the number and reduce the size of community councils so that they correspond more closely to local communities of interest and possibly to service delivery districts.

2: Increase the powers given to the community councils as currently defined, so that their responsibilities are more commensurate with their size and their history as separate municipalities.

3: Consider community councils as a transitional stage in the process of amalgamation.

In considering these options, and perhaps others, the potential role of neighbourhood committees as a means of accomplishing objectives related to community participation, empowerment and the monitoring of service delivery should be considered.

Neighbourhood Committees

Neighbourhood committees are mechanisms for involving citizens who are not members of council in the process of government at the neighbourhood level; they can exist with a variety of forms of municipal government and are not tied to a structure of community councils.

The research has shown that there are many ways for citizens to organize at the neighbourhood level and the selection of an approach should depend on the operating context, community culture and community needs. However, in spite of the variety of experiences there are a number of issues common to the establishment of neighbourhood committees. These issues concern mandate, functions, boundaries and membership. Key choices concerning these are as follows:

- **Mandate:** Should neighbourhood committees be comprehensively mandated by legislation or city charter across an entire municipality and given a definite role in the overall governance structure, as is the case with New York's Community Boards? Or should they be encouraged, and allowed to form and evolve spontaneously, at the discretion of the residents of an area, as is the case with Boston's Neighbourhood Councils? Should the mandate of neighbourhood committees be limited in any way, or should they simply deal with any issues which affect the quality of life in the area they represent?

- **Function:**
  Which activities should neighbourhood committees be involved with? Participation in decision-making through the provision of advice is a typical activity, but practice varies widely concerning the matters dealt with. Choices need to be made concerning planning, policy development, budgets, traffic control and service delivery.

  Choices also exist about whether neighbourhood committees should participate in the delivery of services, such as recreational programs, street clean-ups, recycling and the management and running of community facilities.

- **Boundaries**: Should the boundaries of neighbourhood committees respect ward boundaries, or be defined using other criteria? For example, if neighbourhood committees are to have a service delivery role, such as running recreation facilities or operating programs, should they be organized on the basis of facility catchment areas?

- **Membership:** Should neighbourhood committee executives be appointed, and if so, by whom? Should they be elected? Should they be chosen as delegates from existing associations? Or should they be selected through some combination of these options?

Neighbourhood Committees Fall Into Three Main Categories

Grassroots, "bottom-up" neighbourhood committees which are based on existing voluntary neighbourhood and community associations, and are consequently flexible in terms of size and number, but which fit into a formal network organized and supported by the municipal government. (Portland's Recognized Neighbourhood Associations and District Coalitions, which are widely recognized in the U.S. for their effectiveness, provided the basis for this model.);

Appointed or elected advisory committees whose mandate is linked to a Community Council or functional committee. Halifax's Advisory Sub-committees and Winnipeg's Resident Advisory Groups provide the basis for this model; and

Citizens' boards or councils representing local communities of interest which have a mandate established by legislation or the municipal charter and which are not limited to advising a community council or functional committee of council. New York's Community Boards provided the basis for this model.

The creativity of citizens and local governments, the historical context provided by differing political, cultural and social circumstances all affect the details of specific initiatives and result in a wide variety of local arrangements. Consequently, it is not surprising that the case studies provide examples of neighbourhood committees that do not fall neatly into one of the three categories.

Findings Concerning Neighbourhood Committees

The following summary of findings is based on both research of written material, interviews and workshop discussions.

- Neighbourhood committees exist in different forms in many jurisdictions around the world and collectively their roles are continually expanding and changing..

- In many jurisdictions the scope of neighbourhood committee activity is broader than is traditional in most Ontario cities, thus suggesting there is the potential to expand the role of neighbourhood committees.

- Neighbourhood committees can create additional opportunities for formal citizen participation in municipal government and add direct participants to the local governance system, in addition to elected councillors.

- Existing stakeholders sometimes resist mechanisms that broaden the base of participation to include new groups. (Those who have a voice do not always recognize that others do not have an effective communication channel.)

- Neighbourhood committees provide an important opportunity for minority points of view to be heard.

- Often neighbourhoods that have the greatest need of more civic representation are the ones that have the most difficulty initiating and recruiting volunteers for neighbourhood committees.

- Neighbourhood committees can perform a useful role in providing an efficient interface between staff and citizens that makes effective use of citizen and staff time.

- Neighbourhood committees need staff and council support to succeed.

- Although Ontario municipalities have a strong legacy of citizen involvement, this tradition is closely associated with institutionalized citizen participation in the preparation of community or secondary plans and the review of development proposals. Other cities have developed formal arrangements to involve citizens and communities in decisions regarding budgets and service delivery, in addition to planning matters. The introduction of this approach to Ontario might also facilitate the development of more efficient and collaborative decision-making procedures and provide a broader role for neighbourhood organizations, including opportunities for consultation related to integrated, community-focused service delivery.

- The transition from an existing structure of ratepayers groups to a more formal structure needs to be done in a way that maintains existing volunteer interest and support. Implementation of any new neighbourhood committee structures will take time, and changes to existing informal and institutionalized arrangements should include consultation with all those affected by such changes in order to preserve interest and involvement.

- It is not unusual for the level of interest in neighbourhood committees in particular neighbourhoods to wax and wane over the long term depending on the issues the community is seeking to address.

- To remain active and energized over the long term neighbourhood committees require a range of activities that interest and motivate volunteers.

- Decisions regarding community councils and neighbourhood committees will be most productively made in the context of a vision of the municipal governance system as a whole.

A consideration that relates to both community councils and neighbourhood committees in deciding whether to emphasize strong community councils or the creation of strong neighbourhood committees is the degree of importance attached to new participants into the municipal governance system.

Conclusion

The research undertaken for this study has shown that municipal governments world-wide are continually innovating in response to the changing demands of citizens. The scope and richness of the ideas gathered through this work has demonstrated that it is important for municipalities to monitor the developments and experience in other jurisdictions in order to best meet the needs of their residents.

Table of Contents:

1. INTRODUCTION **1**

2. PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT **1**

3. THE TERMS "COMMUNITY COUNCIL" AND "NEIGHBOURHOOD COMMITTEE" NEED TO BE DEFINED **2**

4. SCOPE OF THE INSTITUTE'S RESEARCH AND CHOICE OF CITIES FOR CASE STUDIES **3**

5. CONTEXT: KEY ISSUES IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE RELATED TO COMMUNITY COUNCILS AND NEIGHBOURHOOD COMMITTEES **8**

5.1 Re-inventing Government and Rediscovering Community Are Pervasive Trends Affecting Discussions of Municipal Restructuring and Community-based Governance 8
5.2 The Introduction of Mechanisms to Promote Community-Based Government is an International Phenomenon 10

6. COMMUNITY COUNCILS **11**

6.1 Community Councils: the Hamilton-Wentworth Constituent Assembly and the Evolution of the Concept 12
6.2 The Concept of Community Councils 14
6.3 Alternative Models of Community Councils 17
6.4 Community Councils in Practice 20
6.5 Community Councils In Operation and Proposed: Winnipeg, Halifax and Toronto 22
  6.5.1 Winnipeg has experienced some difficulty with a community council structure 23
  6.5.2 A More Promising Situation in Halifax 24
  6.5.3 Community Councils: Issues and Options for the New Toronto 25
6.6 Summary of Findings Regarding Community Councils 26

7. NEIGHBOURHOOD COMMITTEES **27**

7.1 Neighbourhood Committees: Issues and Options 28
7.2 Three Potential Models For Neighbourhood Committees Were Identified 29
7.3. Neighbourhood Committees: Assessing The Models 31
  7.3.1 Model No. 1: Neighbourhood Committees Based On Recognized Neighbourhood Associations 32
  7.3.2 Model No. 2: Neighbourhood Committees As Appointed Advisory Committees 33
  7.3.3 Model No. 3: Neighbourhood Committees As Community Boards 34
7.5 Neighbourhood Committees: Considerations For Toronto 35
7.6 Summary Of Findings Concerning Neighbourhood Committees 38

8. INPUT FROM ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS **38**

8.1 Organization of Roundtables 39
8.2 Questions And Comments At The Roundtables 39
  8.2.1 Portland, New York and the Experiences of Other Cities 39
  8.2.2 Impacts of Amalgamation 40
  8.2.3 Community Councils 41
  8.2.4 Neighbourhood Committees 42
8.3 Observations Arising From The Roundtable Discussions 43

9. CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING COMMUNITY COMMITTEES AND NEIGHBOURHOOD COMMITTEES **44**

9.1 Community Councils........ 45
9.2 Neighbourhood Committees 45
9.2 Combining Community Councils And Neighbourhood Committees 46

APPENDICES **49**

APPENDIX "A": CASE STUDIES
APPENDIX "B": LIST OF PEOPLE CONSULTED
APPENDIX "C": NOTES FROM ROUNDTABLE MEETINGS
APPENDIX "D": BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Introduction

Over 50 municipalities in Ontario are currently engaged in restructuring initiatives, most of which involve the consolidation of local councils and/or the elimination of one tier of municipal government. In this context, questions inevitably arise about the effect these changes will have on the relationships between local councils and the citizens they represent.

Restructuring proposals for Hamilton-Wentworth and Metro Toronto have introduced the terms "community council" and "neighbourhood committee" in order to describe two community-based mechanisms for identifying and addressing local issues and priorities in the context of restructured municipalities. To assist in understanding these two concepts, the Canadian Urban Institute has undertaken a research project to examine how and to what extent such mechanisms have been used in other local jurisdictions in Canada, the U.S. and Europe. The primary purpose of the research is to assist Ontario municipalities, citizens, community groups and other stakeholders in identifying, understanding and assessing options for possible implementation.

The Institute's work does not address the pros and cons of amalgamation or other restructuring options being considered in Ontario and we believe that the ideas identified for promoting community involvement in local government decision-making can be considered and/or pursued independently of local government reorganization.

The Institute's research has been funded by the Ministry of Municipal Affair's Office for the Greater Toronto Area (OGTA), in response to an Institute proposal. Following a preliminary report on neighbourhood committees, which included the identification of the three models for neighbourhood committees discussed further in this final report, the project's focus was expanded to include an investigation of community councils.

The Institute also organized five Roundtable discussions with residents and other stakeholders. The first two Roundtables, which were held in Toronto and Hamilton-Wentworth, included the participation of the president of one of New York's largest Community Boards (Queens Community Board No. 7) and a community activist with long-term involvement in Portland's formal network of Recognized Neighbourhood Associations. Summaries of the comments and concerns related to neighbourhood committees and community councils are included in this report.

2. Purpose of This Report

This report summarizes the results of the Institute's research in terms of:

- the larger context for municipal restructuring and related decentralization initiatives;
- the origins and purposes of community councils and neighbourhood committees;

- the roles of community councils and neighbourhood committees in other jurisdictions;
- key questions, concerns and opinions expressed at the five Roundtables; and
- key issues and options related to the implementation of community councils and neighbourhood committees, including those specific to Metro Toronto.

3. The Terms "Community Council" And "Neighbourhood Committee" Need To Be Defined

The terms "community council", "neighbourhood council", "community committee", "neighbourhood committee", "district council" and "community board" are used in North America, Europe and elsewhere to describe a variety of community-based structures intended to introduce a neighbourhood focus into municipal government. The structures described by these terms are frequently associated with efforts to decentralize municipal service delivery, as well as decision-making.

Because "community council" and "neighbourhood committee" have different meanings in different places it is important to clarify at the outset how these terms are used in this report. The following working definitions take into account both current Ontario initiatives and the experiences of other jurisdictions.

> A ***community council*** is defined as a geographically-based (as opposed to functionally-based) committee of council comprised of the councillors elected from a defined area within the municipality. The functions of a ***community council*** may be advisory and/or decision-making but in any case are delegated to it by the city and/or by legislation enacted by a higher level of government.
>
> A ***neighbourhood committee*** is defined as a local citizens organization which
>
> (i) is recognized as representing a defined neighbourhood or local community of interest;
>
> (ii) is formally given specific advisory and/or consultative responsibilities by the municipal council;
>
> (iii) may have responsibility for taking specified actions on behalf of council; and
>
> (iv) may be recognized as a forum for consultation regarding the interests of the area's inhabitants.

The following observations help to further clarify the differences between the two terms:

- Neighbourhood committees increase the number of direct participants in local government.

- Community councils provide an area-based structure for organizing those who have already been elected without increasing the number of direct participants.

- Community councils are intended to provide mechanisms for enhancing access to and increasing the accountability of elected politicians.

- Neighbourhood committees can be seen as a means to more directly empower citizens by giving them a formal role in local government.

As discussed elsewhere in this report, committees of councillors which meet the definition of "community council" set out above are unusual, while neighbourhood or community-based structures which meet the definition of "neighbourhood committee" are common component of local governance systems.

4. Scope Of The Institute's Research And Choice Of Cities For Case Studies

The Institute's research included current books and articles on local government and citizen participation, published reports, information available via the Internet and telephone and e-mail interviews with key participants and municipal officials. As noted, citizen representatives from Portland and New York were brought to Toronto for participation in two of the Institute's five Roundtables.

A list of those interviewed and a bibliography of publications and Internet sites are included in Appendix "B" and Appendix "D", respectively.

Four sources were particularly useful in identifying other case study jurisdictions:

- The Internet site of the **Alliance for Redesigning Government**, an American organization founded in 1993 by a non-partisan coalition with the stated goal of building an information network for people interested in making government work. David Osborne, co-author of **Re-inventing Government** (1992, with Ted Gaebler) and **Banishing Bureaucracy** (1997, with Peter Plastrik) is a co-director of the Alliance.

- **Governing Big Cities**, a 1991 study by Graham Bush, Associate Professor of Political Studies and Director of the Diploma in Local Government and Administration at the University of Auckland in New Zealand. This book examines the theory of and specific strategies for the management of political and administrative decentralization in large cities around the world.

- **The Rebirth of Urban Democracy**, a 1993 book by Jeffrey Berry, Kent Portney and Ken Thomson which examines neighbourhood associations, community boards and other organizations in five U.S. cities which have been particularly successful in demonstrating "how cities can reach out to their neighbourhoods and successfully incorporate average citizens into public policy making." The five cities are Birmingham, Alabama; Dayton, Ohio; Portland, Oregon; St. Paul, Minnesota, and San Antonio, Texas.

- The 1994 **International Handbook of Local and Regional Government**, by Alan Norton of the British Institute of Local Government Studies (INLOGOV).

Nine cities--Edmonton, Halifax, Winnipeg, New York, Boston, Portland, Amsterdam, Christchurch and Paris--were chosen for more detailed case studies primarily on the basis that their governance structure included some form of neighbourhood committee, community council or similar innovative sub-municipal governance structure. Because these cities, with the exception of Paris, were either considerably smaller or larger than the amalgamated City of Toronto, we selected two other North American cities--Chicago (2.9 million) and Los Angeles (3.5 million)--which are closer in size to Metro, and also function essentially as single tier municipalities with a ward-based electoral system.

Although it is often cited as an example of an amalgamated city, we did not include Indianapolis among the case studies because the "Unigov" system introduced in 1969 has not resulted in a real unification of fragmented city and county units.

Background information on local government reform in Great Britain, including recent policy directions concerning the role of parish councils, was researched and summarized. Finally, information related to the Metro Toronto amalgamation and the proposed re-organization of Hamilton-Wentworth was also given careful consideration.

Figure 1 summarizes information related to community councils and neighbourhood committees in the case study cities. Summaries of all the case studies are included in Appendices "A-1" through "A-12" of this report. Appendix "A-12" deals with the U.K.

TABLE 1. COMMUNITY COUNCILS AND NEIGHBOURHOOD COMMITTEES: SUMMARY INFORMATION FOR CASE STUDY MUNICIPALITIES

City	Size (Population)	Council Members + Mayor	Elections At-large or Wards	Community Councils/ Committees	Neighbourhood Committees	Community/ Neighbourhood Staff Support	Comments
Edmonton	637,422	13	6 Wards; 2 councillors per ward; 53,120 pop/ councillor	No	Yes: Community Leagues and Area Councils. Leagues are voluntary community association with dues. Area Council members are delegates from Leagues within a defined area.	Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues (Non-profit organization with some City funding)	Community Leagues are more independent of city council than other neighbourhood committees, which has at times resulted in turf battles with city council and parks department. Area Councils established in part to ease these tensions. Leagues most directly involved in recreational and social issues, but have historically taken activist interest in civic affairs and political and quality of life issues.
Halifax Regional Municipality	330,000	24	23 Wards; 1 councillor per ward; 14,348 pop/ councillor	Yes: 5 Required by Act. Act also permits community committees, where com. council doesn't exist.	Yes: Advisory Sub-committees appointed by com. councils. Act also permits community advisory committees on a ward basis.	No separate department or unit other than Community Services Commission.	
Winnipeg	606,790	16	15 Wards; 1 councillor per ward; 40,453 pop/ councillor	Yes: 5	Yes: Residents Advisory Groups for 3 of 5 Community Committees.	No separate department or unit other than Planning & Community Services Dept.	Unicity legislation established Community Committees and RAGs as dual mechanism for decentralized community involvement.

Boston	575,000	14	4 councillors at Large: 9 by Ward; 44,230 pop/ councillor	No	Yes: Voluntary Neighbourhood Councils	Mayor's Office of Neighbourhood Services	
Chicago	2,900,000	51	50 Wards; 1 councillor per ward; 58,000 pop/ councillor	No	No, but voluntary Block Clubs, community policing, etc. promoted by City	Mayor's Office of Inquiry and Information and Community Services Dept.	
Los Angeles	3,500,000	16	15 Wards; 1 councillor per Ward; 233,333 pop/ councillor	No	Under discussion, based on Portland District Coalition/ Neighbourhood Association model	Community Development Dept. (in addition to Planning Dept.)	
New York	7,500,000	52	51 Wards; 1 councillor per Ward; 147,059 pop/ councillor	No	Yes: 59 Community Boards, mandated by City Charter	Mayor's Community Assistance Unit, plus District Service Manager & Cabinet	
Portland	500,000	5	At Large; 4 councillor/ commissioners 125,000 pop/ councillor	No	Yes; Recognized Neighbourhood Associations in 7 District Coalitions	Office of Neighbourhood Associations, plus staff for District Coalition Boards	Portland has a councillor/ commissioner system, with Mayor & 4 councillors each responsible for specific departments.
Amsterdam	800,000	46: 45 councillors & Burgomaster (Mayor). Burgomaster appointed by reigning monarch	Proportional representation from party lists 45 city councillors 17, 778 pop/ councillor	No	Yes; 16 District or Neighbourhood Councils, each representing 20,000 & 80,000 people	Not known	District Councils function as sub-municipal level of government, but have origins in neighbourhood councils and area management. No Dutch property tax, so implications of sub-municipal government not the same as in North America.

Christchurch	308,000	25	12 Wards; 2 councillors per ward; 12,833 pop/ councillor	No	Yes: 6 Community Boards, with one community board for every 2 wards	City Council's Leisure & Community Services Unit	
Paris	2,150,000	163, for combined city & department council,including a mayor elected by council from its members.	13,190 pop/ councillor	No	Yes: 20 arrondissement councils	Not known	Arrondissement Councils might considered sub-municipal level of government, but don't have separate staff and don't tax. Members are a mix of city councillors & others.

5. Context: Key Issues in Local Governance Related to Community Councils and Neighbourhood Committees

J. A. Chandler introduces his 1993 book, **Local Government in Liberal Democracies,** by commenting that "in recent years local government has ceased to be one of the 'also rans' of comparative politics"-- an observation which our investigations support.

Among other things, local government reform and restructuring exercises provide a focus for contemporary debates about the relationship between government and civil society, the role of government in the lives of individual citizens, the responsibilities of government to its "customers" and the significance of community in determining individual identity.

The prominent role that these issues currently play in local government reform worldwide is closely associated with a widespread interest in community-based government, including mechanisms such as community councils and neighbourhood committees. Section 5.1 identifies two key trends that are currently interwoven with and influence the nature local government reform, and Section 5.2 describes the extent to which related initiatives to promote community-based governance are an international phenomenon.

5.1 Re-inventing Government and Rediscovering Community Are Pervasive Trends Affecting Discussions of Municipal Restructuring and Community-based Governance

Two significant and inter-related trends affecting the relationship between government and community appeared in various forms in all of the cities we examined. Because these trends, and the debates associated with them, are so pervasive, it seems useful to note them at the outset, since they will undoubtedly continue to affect future discussions concerning restructuring and the roles of community-based governance in Ontario's restructured municipalities.

The first of these trends, the "re-inventing government" movement, is based on the now familiar axiom that governments should "steer and not row." This general precept--i.e., that governments should be "enablers" rather than "providers" of services--is associated with deregulation, reductions in the size of government and government spending, and the devolution of responsibility for social programs both from upper to lower levels of government, and from government to the private and volunteer sectors. The second trend, which might be termed the "rediscovering community" movement, is related to the first, but is also linked to traditions of community empowerment and participatory democracy.

The emphasis on community identity and renewal is frequently linked to anti-government sentiments originating from distinctly different political camps. From a perspective usually referred to as "left," a lessening of dependence on government can be seen as positive because it encourages communities to discover, affirm and build on their own capacities, rather than relying on professional direction and government aid, and the control and manipulation that both involve. (John McKnight, author of **Community Building from the Inside Out** and **The Careless Society** is one proponent of this approach.)

From a perspective usually considered to be "right," community renewal based on reduced dependency on professional and government aid is associated with a return to "traditional values" and a renewed dependence on market forces, "contract culture", and volunteerism to provide social services.

While the reinventing government agenda promotes the concept of citizens as individual consumers or customers, the "rediscovering community" movement, which is often associated with the social and political ideas grouped under the heading "communitarianism", emphasizes the importance of engagement in community life as an important source of individual identity. From this perspective, local government is seen not simply as the provider of services or the enabler of service provision by others, and but also as a means of supporting community life and a shared sense of purpose.

In assessing these two approaches to citizenship, i.e., the citizen as individual consumer and the citizen as community member and participant, Vivien Lowndes (1995) notes a renewed concern with "the triangle of relationships between individuals, their communities and the institutions of local governance." Lowndes' discussion of the two concepts of citizenship brings into focus the fairly conventional description of the two functions of local government as concerned with efficient administration and service delivery on one hand, and with the political expression of shared purpose and community identity on the other.

Many political analysts, academics, community development advocates and citizen activists continue to struggle with the questions of whether and/or under what conditions re-inventing government and re-discovering community are governed by progressive agendas. These same debates are inevitable in the Ontario context of local government restructuring, with the result that discussions over the structure of local government frequently and understandably become ideologically charged.

An approach which could help foster constructive public debate would be to encourage a discussion that addresses both effective political representation and efficient service delivery. In this regard, it is interesting to note that in Amsterdam, the optimal size of a sub-municipal unit of government was identified as approximately 60,000, based largely on considerations related to service delivery. In New York, where community board districts are intended to be co-terminous with service delivery districts, the identified range was between 100,000 and 250,000. Therefore, it may be helpful to consider the appropriate size for integrated service delivery districts in the new City of Toronto in parallel with the role of community councils and neighbourhood committees.

5.2 The Introduction of Mechanisms to Promote Community-Based Government is an International Phenomenon

Based on the Institute's research, it is clear that a renewed interest in the relationship between community and local government, including the role of innovative sub-municipal structures, is a widespread phenomenon.

In terms of the U.S., Elaine B. Sharpe (1990) observes that:

> "...in stark contrast with most of the open government and information-gleaning forms of citizen participation, strategies for bringing neighbourhood interest groups into local governmental affairs have had so much success that they have become a new layer of governance in many cities." (p. 86)

It is interesting that Sharpe is careful to refer to "governance" and not "government" in speaking of U.S. examples. In European cities, however, there is less concern than in the U.S. (and in Canada) to draw sharp distinctions between voluntary, community organizations, on one hand, and levels of government, on the other. Consequently, in many European cities, including the case study cities of Amsterdam and Paris, decentralized, neighbourhood-based structures are more readily accepted as a sub-municipal level of government. This willingness to accept large numbers of elected representatives and multiple levels of local government is undoubtedly related to the fact that in European cities elected community representatives seem more likely to be perceived as community leaders, rather than "professional politicians."

As Alan Norton points out in the 1994 **International Handbook of Local and Regional Government**, sub-municipal citizens councils and advisory boards have been accepted in Europe since the 1950's as a means of bringing power closer to the people and of drawing a wider range of participants into political systems. Norton also draws attention to the series of surveys related to citizen participation, information and communication carried out in the late 1970s and early 1980s by the Council of Europe. These surveys, which included *Conditions of Local Democracy and Citizen Participation in Europe* (1978) and *Methods of Consulting Citizens on Municipal Affairs* (1981), identified a broad range of roles and responsibilities for area councils and neighbourhood advisory boards, from public consultation to delegated action to actual control of municipal facilities by users themselves.

Canadian and U.S. cities share important characteristics which distinguish them from European cities, including the context provided by a federal as opposed to a unitary national government structure; the fact that both were initially colonies; and the less overt role currently played by political parties at the local level. Nevertheless, North American traditions of citizen participation, neighbourhood government and community empowerment have a significant post-war history.

It would seem that as urban economies grow, and urban regions become major players in a global economy--particularly in Europe, where the European Community reduces the significance of national boundaries and increases the significance of regions--a counter-interest in scale reduction has also emerged.[1] As a result, the search for innovative solutions for regional governance is accompanied by corresponding efforts to decentralize and to create community-based structures.

Issues of scale and the widespread interest in community-based government provide a context for current discussions in Ontario regarding community councils and neighbourhood committees. These ideas and the terminology associated with reinventing government and rediscovering community have also emerged in the case studies.

6. Community Councils

"Community council" is used in this report to refer to a committee of elected councillors. Community councils defined in this way are virtually non-existent outside Canada, and are highly unusual even within its borders. In Canada, community councils are associated with two situations--amalgamations (Winnipeg, Halifax and Toronto) and rural communities within a single jurisdiction (i.e. Halifax County, prior to its amalgamation into the Halifax Regional Municipality).

Community councils are also a key component of the amalgamated structure introduced by the recent enactment of a new City of Toronto Act (Bill 103, as amended and enacted). However, the term as used in that Act was based in large part on concepts that emerged in the context of the report of the Hamilton-Wentworth Constituent Assembly[2] and which were refined as the amalgamation debate in Hamilton-Wentworth took shape.

This section outlines the original concept as proposed by the Constituent Assembly in Hamilton-Wentworth; describes what the concept means in theory (including the identification of three possible models); and how it has worked in practice; and looks at options for the new City of Toronto. The final part of this section summarizes the Institute's findings with respect to community councils.

---

[1] The chapter by Adriaan Bours entitled "Management, tiers, size and amalgamations of local government" in Bennett (1993) provides a useful discussion of what Bours terms the "clash" between the two opposite forces of scale enlargement and scale reduction in European urban areas. "Scale enlargement," notes Bours, "is a feature of rationality, of increasing efficiency, effectiveness and control: 'Management by territory' to raise the capacity of local areas....Scale reduction is a feature of territoriality and of democracy (self-government, shaping freedom) and better management." Bours also notes the relationship between scale reduction and decentralization: "powers are shared by more units....As a feature of democratisation, scale reduction enlarges in many cases the number of elected representatives, which is the opposite of the case of territorial scale enlargement."

[2] The Constituent Assembly was established in response to a strategy recommended by the Regional Chairman's Task Force on Sustainable Development, a citizens' group created in 1990 and mandated by the Regional Council to explore the concept of sustainable development. In 1993, the Task Force recommended the establishment of a community working group to examine alternative political structures, including one tier municipal government and a directly elected Regional Council. The Constituent Assembly was the forum used to act on this recommendation

6.1 Community Councils: the Hamilton-Wentworth Constituent Assembly and the Evolution of the Concept

The April 1996 final report of the Hamilton-Wentworth Constituent Assembly (**Better Municipal Government**) introduced the term "community committee" into public discussion in Ontario in order to describe a formal but flexible political forum which would "act as a link between the municipal council and citizens in a defined community and...provide a way for citizens to participate more effectively in the governance of their community."

Elsewhere in the Constituent Assembly's report, community committees are described as a means of making interactions between councillors and citizens less informal and more representative of all members of a defined community of interest. Each committee was seen as potentially including a mix of citizen representatives and elected councillors from an identified community within the municipality. The boundaries between communities would not necessarily correspond to older municipal boundaries, and could be modified over time.

Community committees as presented in the Hamilton-Wentworth report are similar in many respects to British parish councils. (See Appendix "A-12".) For example, both are formally constituted but flexibly organized representative bodies which provide a focus for the expression of local community identities, and both have a representative and participatory function, with some limited degree of delegated decision-making authority. Finally, there were not a fixed number of community committees within a given area, and their boundaries were to be determined by the communities themselves, on the basis of community identity.

Figure 2, which is taken from the Hamilton-Wentworth report, provides a summary of the roles these flexibly constituted but formally mandated committees were proposed to have. The table also sets out the anticipated roles of municipal councillors and the municipal council, in order to indicate how the community committees fit with an overall system of governance.

FIGURE 2 HAMILTON-WENTWORTH CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY FINAL REPORT: SUMMARY OF ROLES OF MUNICIPAL COUNCILLORS, MUNICIPAL COUNCIL AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEES

	MUNICIPAL COUNCILLOR	MUNICIPAL COUNCIL	COMMUNITY COMMITTEES
Roles	• represent, advocate, and respond to the concerns of their constituents and the interest and need of their community • advocate on issues concerning delivery and provision of services in their community • respond to specific concerns of constituents • take concerns forward and lobby for changes • meet with local neighbourhood groups to get input on issues, needs, priorities • responsible for ensuring that the Community Committees fulfill their mandate and to carry forward the Committee's recommendations to the Municipal Council	• adopts vision statement on purpose values and mission of the municipality to guide decision-making • responsible for decision-making on policy, management, and delivery of municipal services • delegates locally-specific decisions to Community Committees • establishes policies, allocates resources between services • monitors policies • appoints effective senior management	• monitor service delivery • make recommendations on community needs, issues and priorities • make decisions on locally-specific delegated matters • provide for citizen participation in municipal government
Citizen input and participation	• interpersonal • neighbourhood meetings • through Community Committees	• special meetings of the Municipal Council to receive citizen deputations • establishment of ad hoc task forces	• meetings of the Community Committee • citizens could become members of the Community Committee • open public meetings in forums that can vary by community and determined by Community Committees (e.g., groups, rate payer associations)

As Hamilton-Wentworth restructuring discussions moved into the formal political arena, the concept of community committees as broadly described by the Constituent Assembly changed. Instead of separate, community-based, largely advisory councils potentially including both citizens and councillors, the term was instead used to refer to a way of grouping councillors elected to an amalgamated city council on the basis of the communities they represented. For example, the November 8, 1996 Memorandum of Negotiations, which was signed by representatives of four of the six local municipalities, referred to community councils, comprised primarily of elected councillors, instead of to community committees as described by the Constituent Assembly.

The January 31, 1997 report of Ernie Hardeman on the implementation of the Memorandum was even more detailed, and in fact identified the exact number of community councils intended for the Hamilton-Wentworth area. Mr. Hardeman's report also stated that the community councils would be comprised of the elected councillors from particular areas, as defined by the report. These committees were not to have taxing power or their own staff so they would not become another level of government. Finally, the community councils would include non-elected members only where necessary to ensure that there would be at least three members on each council.

In other words, the concept outlined by the Constituent Assembly, which had been envisaged as more closely tied to community life, as are British parish councils, became a form of area-based committee of council. This modification of the concept was also reflected in background material associated with Bill 103, which described community councils as they were envisaged for a new City of Toronto.

No provincial legislation has been introduced for Hamilton-Wentworth and the future of local government reform in that municipality is uncertain at present. However, legislation enacted to create the new amalgamated City of Toronto provides that community councils are to be comprised of elected councillors from specific geographic areas, and are to be considered committees of council. However, rather than defining communities, in the manner envisaged in Hamilton, the Toronto legislation provides for six community councils, one for each of the "old" Metro municipalities.

Although the new Toronto Council is permitted to enact a by-law to dissolve all of the community councils, and establish new ones, the legislation requires that either all parts of the new City will have community councils, or none will, and that all members of community councils must be elected councillors.

6.2 The Concept of Community Councils

Notwithstanding the changes to the concept as initially expressed in the Constituent Assembly's Final Report, the structure that emerged in Hamilton-Wentworth and in Bill 103--i.e., a community-based committee of councillors --is a mechanism that has the potential to achieve the following:

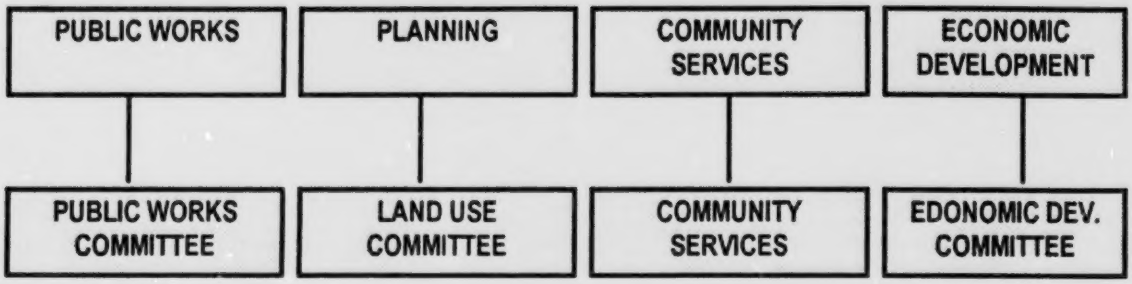
- creation of decentralized forums for addressing issues of concern to individual communities within a municipality, where members of the community can address their particular councillors on these matters, rather than having to appear before a functional committee of council dealing issues from across the city;
- decentralized decision-making on issues whose impact does not extend beyond the boundaries of the community;
- recognition of different interests, concerns and levels of service among different communities within a municipal government;
- promotion of a sense of community identity, through interactions among community members, and between the community and its elected representatives, on issues of local concern; and
- increased ability to collectively explore and define community positions on city-wide issues.

In terms of this last point, Figure 3 illustrates the difference between a standing committee structure based on functions and one based on area. In addition to permitting a range of community issues to be addressed in an integrated fashion, a community council structure has the potential to promote a team approach on the part of departmental staff.

FIGURE 3 LINKAGES OF DEPARTMENTS AND ISSUES TO FUNCTIONAL COMMITTEES OF COUNCIL VERSUS COMMUNITY COUNCILS/COMMITTEES

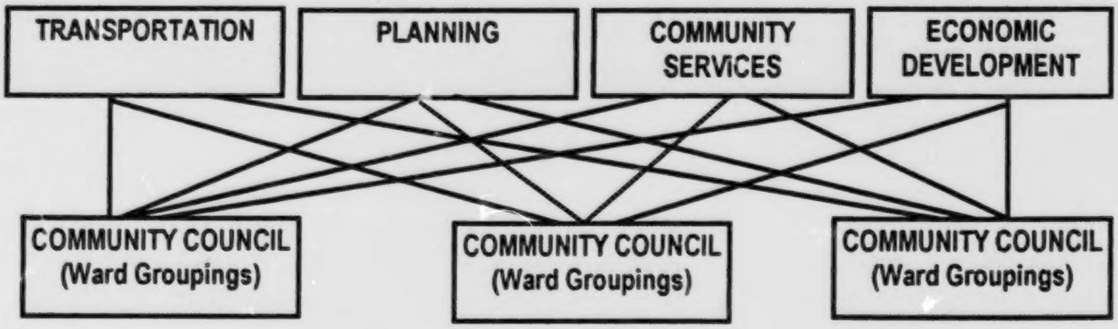
FUNCTIONAL COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

SELECTED DEPARTMENTS/ ISSUES


PUBLIC WORKS
PLANNING
COMMUNITY SERVICES
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE
LAND USE COMMITTEE
COMMUNITY SERVICES
EDONOMIC DEV. COMMITTEE

COMMUNITY COUNCIL STRUCTURE

DEPARTMENTS/ COMMUNITY ISSUES


TRANSPORTATION
PLANNING
COMMUNITY SERVICES
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
COMMUNITY COUNCIL (Ward Groupings)
COMMUNITY COUNCIL (Ward Groupings)
COMMUNITY COUNCIL (Ward Groupings)

6.3 Alternative Models of Community Councils

Although community councils might seem to be a useful mechanism for decentralizing municipal decision-making and for promoting increased access to and accountability of elected politicians, experience with this model is extremely limited. Winnipeg's system of Community Committees and Resident Advisory Groups was put in place in 1971 on the basis of the concept as generally described in Section 6.2, and the recently amalgamated Halifax Regional Municipality is also following an approach which is generally consistent with this concept. As discussed in the appendices describing these two cities, Halifax community councils have more powers than do Winnipeg's, and for this and other reasons, promise to be more successful in achieving the objectives listed above.

British municipalities have also experimented with the concept. The fact that British units of local government are on average much larger than those found elsewhere in Europe and North America provides one explanation for why decentralization of local councils into area-based committees has been tried in the U.K.

Two of a limited number of examples of area-based committees of council in the U.K. are found in Glasgow and Tower Hamlets. Background on these examples is included in Appendix "A-12".

1. The Area Management Committees of the consolidated Glasgow District Council were established in 1973 as the result of recommendations from the Wheatley Commission. These Area Management Committees provided a key mechanism for interaction with Glasgow's separately elected, advisory community councils. (Scottish community councils correspond to British parish councils, and as such are not the same thing as community councils as defined in Ontario and in this report, where parish councils are termed neighbourhood committees.) The Area Management Committees more closely corresponded to community councils or area-based committees of council.

2. The radical decentralization of the borough council of Tower Hamlets (population 120,000) into seven neighbourhood councils was introduced by the Liberal borough council in 1986. (The London Borough of Islington and the cities of Birmingham and Middlesborough have also introduced area-based management and decision-making initiatives, but Tower Hamlets is usually the example cited when referring to radical, area-based decentralization of a local council.)

In terms of the recently enacted legislation for the new City of Toronto, community councils as envisaged for the new amalgamated City of Toronto represent a variation on the concept as generally understood and as described in Section 6.2 above. Rather than community councils based on the definition of individual communities of interest, community councils as defined in Bill 103 are comprised of the councillors from each of the "old" municipalities, regardless of how large or small these municipalities may be, or how many separate communities each may contain.

The community councils defined by the City of Toronto Act correspond to the "old" municipalities as follows:

East York:	population 104,115;	1 ward;	2 councillors
York:	population 143,379;	2 wards;	4 councillors
Etobicoke:	population 331,183;	4 wards;	8 councillors
Scarborough:	population 566,123;	6 wards;	12 councillors
North York:	population 575,114;	7 wards;	14 councillors
Toronto:	population 629,129	8 wards;	16 councillors

Taking the preceding considerations and the very few existing examples into account, it is possible to establish three alternative models of community councils. These three models, which are summarized in point form in Figure 4, can be described as follows:

Model 1: The Local Community of Interest Model

This model is based on the establishment of area-based committees of council comprised of the councillors elected from separate communities, with the communities being defined on the basis of shared interests and local identity, and not municipal boundaries. Because one of the primary reasons for establishing community councils of this type is to promote community access to and accountability of elected councillors, it is important that the community councils be as small as possible. A minimum number of three councillors is intended to facilitate the identification of a quorum, and to minimize the possibility of tie votes.

Model 2: The Amalgamated Municipal Federation Model

This model is intended to describe a situation where a two tier system has been consolidated into an amalgamated, single tier municipality, with the boundaries of "old" lower tier municipalities preserved as boundaries for committees of council termed community councils.

This model is based on the concept of community councils set out in Bill 103 as amended and enacted.

The fundamental difference between Model 2 and the Metro Toronto federation prior to 1988[3] is the fact that community councils, as established in Bill 103, are committees of council and not separate municipalities. Consequently, the community councils described by this model do not have the power to levy taxes, employ staff or to make final decisions on matters other than those which existing legislation permits to be delegated to them.

Model 3: The Radical Decentralization Model

This model is based on the fairly extensive literature from the U.K. on local government decentralization initiatives, and specifically the initiative pursued in Tower Hamlets (See Appendix "12"). This model involves a radical application of the principle of subsidiarity to a municipal context and is based on the devolution of all functions that can be devolved without completely eliminating the primary council.

---

[3] Until 1988, Metro Council was indirectly elected.

FIGURE 4

COMMUNITY COUNCILS: THREE MODELS FOR DECENTRALIZATION OF MUNICIPAL COUNCILLORS, WITH NO ADDITIONS OF DIRECT PARTICIPANTS IN DECISION-MAKING

MODEL 1 LOCAL COMMUNITY OF INTEREST	MODEL 2 AMALGAMATED MUNICIPAL FEDERATION	MODEL 3 RADICAL DECENTRALIZATION
• Maximum number of small community councils, provided each council has at least three members • Communities based on history, geography, local identity, without reference to municipal boundaries at time of amalgamation • Mandate: (i) delegated decision-making only with regard to issues where impact is limited to the community itself; (ii) advisory with respect to city-wide issues dealt with by city council • Primary purposes are: (i) to provide access to local councillors and promote their accountability to the community; (ii) to provide forum for community issues/concerns; (iii) to enhance shared community identity and (iv) to decentralize municipal decision-making on local issues such as parking, streets, parks and recreation, and some aspects of planning • No separate taxation powers; staff assigned by city administration	• Community boundaries correspond exactly to boundaries of existing municipalities at time of amalgamation • Similar to two-tier system with indirect election, except community councils are committees of city council, not municipalities • Mandate and primary purposes similar to Model 1 • Without enabling legislation to give community councils significant decision-making powers, this model represents a somewhat distorted version of Model 1.	• Communities defined as per either Model 1 or Model 2, or some size in between • Mandate: Maximum devolution of responsibility from city council to committees of councillors • Power to tax and directly employ staff • Community councils function essentially as separate municipalities • Mandate and functions of city council limited to only those matters which cannot be dealt with by community councils (subsidiarity principle)

6.4 Community Councils in Practice

There are few operating examples of area-based committees of council. In fact, outside of Canada, the only examples identified were in the U.K. As noted in Appendix "A-12", the British example of the London borough of Tower Hamlets has been experimenting in radical neighbourhood-focused decentralization in communities experiencing extremes with respect to social conflict and economic deprivation.

In his 1991 book **Governing Big Cities**, Graham Bush also notes the very limited extent to which municipal governments have utilized an area-based committee structure, and identifies seven factors to account for this situation. It should be noted that the criticisms are ones leveled from a range of political perspectives.

1. There are competing alternatives to community councils, including the role played by the ward system itself; i.e., the ward councillor, traditionally acting as ward "steward" and perhaps assisted by party mechanisms, can identify community interests and concerns, act on behalf of his/her constituents, and oversee community participation within his/her ward.

2. In the context of a traditional (functionally-based) committee system, area-based community councils threaten the power bases of senior politicians.

3. A system of community councils, which is an essentially flat, "horizontal" structure, represents a challenge to the vertical hierarchy of control on which city departments are based.

4. Some have condemned community councils as mechanisms for postponing the advent of real community control.

5. The introduction of community councils can incite demands for community activists to be allowed into policy making.

6. Community councils are an attempt to dethrone the predominant functional basis of municipal organization.

7. The existence of community councils make it harder to undercut proposals for area-based management and field offices.

(adapted from Bush, 1991, pp.57-58)

Bush observes that although area committees are often associated with decentralized service delivery and area management structures, area-based management can be introduced to a more traditional functionally-based committee system.

In terms of points 2, 3 and 6 in Bush's list, Figures 5 and 6 illustrate the difficulty which could arise when area-based community councils are introduced into a typical council/standing committee structure, which is based on standing committees organized around functional issues, with functionally-based departments reporting to these standing committees.

FIGURE 5 **TYPICAL COUNCIL/COMMITTEE STRUCTURE: WITHOUT COMMUNITY COUNCILS**

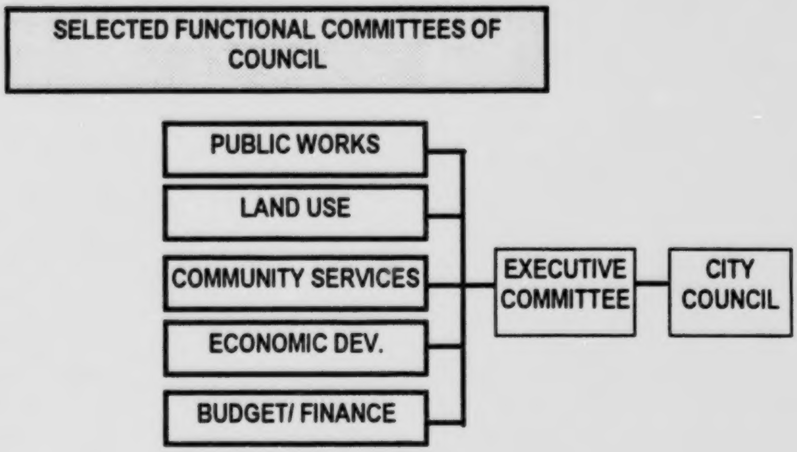
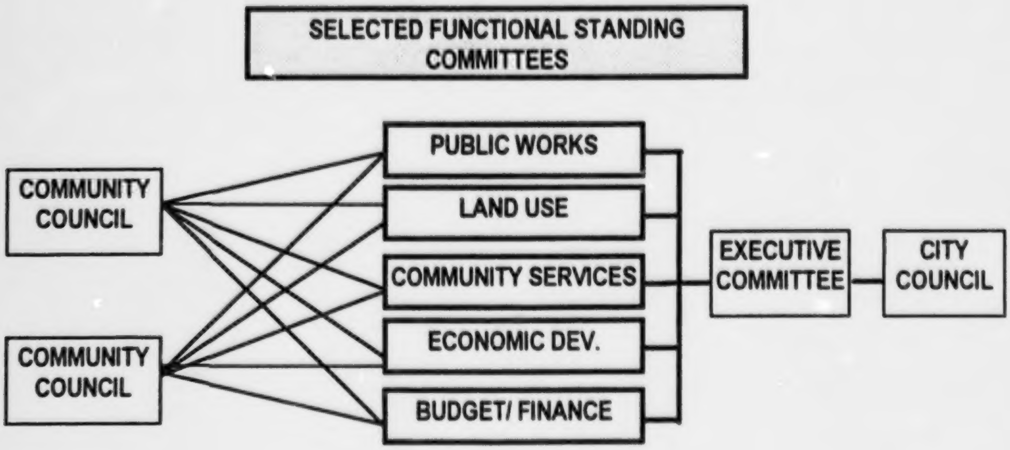

SELECTED FUNCTIONAL COMMITTEES OF COUNCIL
PUBLIC WORKS
LAND USE
COMMUNITY SERVICES
ECONOMIC DEV.
BUDGET/ FINANCE
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
CITY COUNCIL

FIGURE 6 TYPICAL COUNCIL/COMMITTEE STRUCTURE: POSSIBLE IMPACT OF INTRODUCING COMMUNITY COUNCILS WHEN ISSUES MUST ALSO MOVE THROUGH FUNCTIONAL COMMITTEES



6.5 Community Councils In Operation and Proposed: Winnipeg, Halifax and Toronto

As noted, Canada would appear to be the only country outside of the U.K. where community councils, defined as area-based committees of council, are to be found. Because these area-based committees of council are associated with significant restructurings and amalgamations, it seems logical that they would not be found in the U.S. where the last true amalgamation was the one which created New York City in 1898; where metropolitan governments are extremely rare; and where state governments cannot or do not exercise the degree of control over local governments that characterizes Canada, and, to an even greater extent, the U.K.

In terms of continental Europe, local government restructuring is less frequent and less extreme than in the U.K., and the attachment of citizens to historic communal government structures makes amalgamation difficult in any event. In addition, continental European cities are less concerned to reduce levels of government and numbers of politicians, and consequently, area-based decentralization would appear to be much more likely to take the form of elected neighbourhood governance structures, such as those in Amsterdam and Paris.

The following sections provide comments on the three Canadian municipalities where community councils are either in place and operating (Winnipeg and Halifax, both of which are examples of Model 1), or have been legislated (Toronto, which is the example for Model 2).

6.5.1 Winnipeg has experienced some difficulty with a community council structure

An account of Winnipeg's experience with community Committees and Residents' Advisory Groups is included in Appendix "A-3". According to the City of Winnipeg Act, the role and mandate of community committees are:

1) to maintain the closest possible communication between the City and the residents of the community;

2) to provide the residents of the community with information concerning existing and potential City policies, programs and budgets; and

3) to make the fullest and best use of the Residents' Advisory Group for the community.

The City of Winnipeg Act also provides that community committees are to hold regularly scheduled meetings dealing with the business of the community, facilitate community participation in the preparation of capital and operating budgets, hold meetings at least every three months to consider progress reports on city programs and projects, and, at least once a year, hold a community conference for residents.

The reasons generally identified for the failure of community committees to successfully realize the objectives can be summarized as follows:

- When first amalgamated, Winnipeg had 13 community committees, and the area represented by each committee generally corresponded to an identifiable community, although not in all instances to an existing municipality. However, subsequent reductions in the number of community committees from 13 to 6 and then to 5, which was related to a reduction in the number of wards and councillors from 50 to 29 and then to 15, with a corresponding increase in the size of the area represented by the community committee and in the number of people represented by each councillor, have undermined the sense that each committee represents a recognizable community.

- Winnipeg's community committees have few significant responsibilities. Those they were given initially have been reduced through the creation of a Board of Adjustment to handle minor variances, and the delegation of decision-making on neighbourhood issues to staff, who work in consultation with the ward councillor.

- The City Council is organized into functional committees and an Executive and Policy Committee, and substantive issues are dealt with at these committees prior to consideration by the full council. For example, community committees hold hearings on rezoning applications within their boundaries, but then the matter moves to the Planning Committee, before proceeding to the Council via the City Executive and Policy Committee.

- The strategy for promoting citizen involvement in Winnipeg's Community Committees--the Resident Advisory Groups (RAGs)--is generally acknowledged to

> be ineffective. In fact, only three of the five Committees are supported by RAGs, primarily due to the lack of citizen interest. In addition, the RAGs are poorly funded and resourced, and have not enjoyed the respect and support of either staff or councillors. They are also constrained in the issues they address as the result of being tied to the limited mandate of the community committees.

One former Winnipeg councillor interviewed expressed the view that the community committee structure has increased the public accountability of councillors. However, the ineffectiveness of community committees in the overall structure of the city government is frequently acknowledged. Notwithstanding mixed reviews, the community committees have been maintained, indicating a certain level of support.

6.5.2 A More Promising Situation in Halifax

Halifax Regional Municipality also has area-based committees, called community councils. Although these have not been in existence long enough to be thoroughly evaluated, they appear to be working effectively. One factor which suggests that Halifax's community councils may have a more positive future than Winnipeg's community committees is the fact that a community council structure was used successfully prior to the 1996 amalgamation, in the Municipality of Halifax County. In fact, the legislation governing the Municipality of Halifax County served as a model for the Halifax Regional Municipality Act.

In addition, Halifax Council does not have functional standing committees of council, but instead meets as a committee of the whole to consider matters which in other municipalities would likely be dealt with by functional standing committees. As a result, the regional council avoids the difficulties associated with a committee system consisting of both area-based and functional committees, as represented by Figure 6.

Although apparently functioning successfully at present, implementation of community councils in accordance with the Halifax Regional Municipality Act has raised at least two difficulties. One is the refusal of the councillor who represents the central business district to sit on a community council. A second difficulty involves the need to address both differences in taxation and levels of service in different communities.

In terms of the second issue, the Halifax Regional Municipality Act provides that each community council is to develop its own operating budget to be financed by an area rate, along with a proposed capital budget for projects to be financed by the Regional Council and charged back to the community. However, the Regional Council is currently also considering the establishment of three separate tax rates--urban, suburban and rural--all of which would be levied by the Regional Council. (Area rates would apply "on top of" these three base rates.)The reconciliation of different tax structures and different levels of service with "old" municipal boundaries is proving to be an extremely complex exercise.

It is significant to note that there is an apparent reluctance to introduce community councils elsewhere in Nova Scotia. Provincial legislation establishing the Regional Municipalities of Cape Breton provides for community councils but these have not been established.

Legislation for the Regional Municipality of Queens does not include provisions for community councils. In addition, at this point, it does not appear likely that the new Municipal Act being drafted for Nova Scotia will include enabling provisions for community councils.

6.5.3 Community Councils: Issues and Options for the New Toronto

As envisaged in the legislation establishing the new City of Toronto, community councils correspond to the boundaries of the "old" lower tier municipalities. However, the community councils are not to be a separate level of government, and at present their responsibilities are limited to local planning issues which the Planning Act permits to be delegated to committees of council (minor variances, consents, development review--but not rezonings or official plan amendments), as well as local recreational matters.

A number of issues are raised by the introduction of community councils as provided for in the enacted legislation:

- Due to their size, the community councils will actually represent more than a single local community of interest. (For example, it would be difficult to argue that the City of Toronto, with a population of approximately 630,000, comprises a single community comparable to one of the communities which make up post-amalgamation Halifax, the largest of which represents a population of about 90,000.)

- If maintained over the longer term following a period of transition, the reconfirmation of existing municipal boundaries may make it difficult to achieve an integrated council for the entire city. The creation of an Executive Committee comprised of the chairs of the community councils may help to achieve integration, but could also result in increased tensions among what were once separate municipalities.

- If there are to be functional standing committees of council as well as community councils, the issues of what matters are to be sent to community councils, and at what stage, will have to be resolved. In addition, staff reports and other issues dealt with by community councils which require city council approval will likely proceed to council via a functional standing committee and the executive committee which adds additional time to the approvals process. Figure 6 illustrates the potential for complexity.

- Unlike the Halifax legislation, legislation for the new City of Toronto would not permit community councils to amend zoning by-laws. However, giving Toronto's community councils rezoning powers may make it more difficult to change the boundaries of the communities in the future, particularly if existing municipal zoning bylaws are left in place.

- It is unclear how existing municipal staff will relate to the community councils. If the administration is reorganized, staff and departmental organizational structures and service delivery districts may no longer correspond to existing municipal boundaries.

The legislation permits the new Toronto City Council to change the boundaries and number of community councils, or to abolish them altogether, with the proviso that all parts of the new city must either be represented by a community council, or that none should be.

It is also possible that the new council will further empower its community councils through the enactment of procedural bylaws. For example, the new council might require a two thirds vote to vary a recommendation from a community council. However, the extent to which this approach will actually be empowering depends on the matters referred to community councils for their advice. In addition, of course, a procedural by-law itself can be varied, a situation that might well occur with respect to contentious issues of interest to the larger council or individual councillors.

Taking these considerations and the issues identified above into account, it would appear that the new City Council will have the following options regarding implementation of community councils:

Option 1: Increase the number and reduce the size of community councils so that they correspond more closely to local communities of interest and possibly to service delivery districts, as per Model 1.

Option 2: Increase the powers given to community councils[4] so that their responsibilities are more commensurate with their size and their history as separate municipalities, with the result that Model 2 is more clearly and consistently applied.

Option 3: Consider community councils as a transitional stage in the process of amalgamation.

In considering these options, and perhaps others, the potential role of neighbourhood committees as a means of accomplishing objectives related to community participation, empowerment and the monitoring of service delivery should be taken into account.

6.6 Summary of Findings Regarding Community Councils

- Area-based committees of council comprised of councillors elected from contiguous wards are unusual, and are virtually unknown outside of Canada.

- Community committees in Winnipeg appear no longer to function effectively, and a number of matters that they dealt with initially have been shifted to a Board of Adjustment (minor variances), or delegated to staff, working in consultation with the ward councillor.

- The situation in Halifax appears to be more promising, but is still relatively untested. The Halifax Regional Municipality Act gives more specific direction to Community Councils than is the case in Winnipeg, and the amalgamated Halifax inherited a pre-amalgamation tradition of community councils, which has helped to establish their credibility.

---

[4] A meaningful increase in power would likely require provincial legislation.

- The absence of functional standing committees of council, as is the case in Halifax, where the entire council meets as a committee of the whole to deal with functional issues, enhances the usefulness and effectiveness of community councils.
- Community councils and area ratings initially would appear to provide useful mechanisms for addressing the provision of different levels of services to rural and urban communities within a single municipality. However, the use of area ratings in Halifax has proved to be more difficult than anticipated, and the establishment of different base rates for taxes to be levied by the regional council is also being pursued.
- Because they are largely advisory, have no taxing power and have limited responsibilities, community councils in an amalgamated municipality are not comparable in terms of decision-making power to the lower tier of government in a metropolitan system, although there are some similarities between the establishment of community councils and an indirectly elected two-tier structure.
- To be effective, the scope of the issues dealt with by a community council should be appropriate to the size of the area represented. A community council empowered to deal with local stop signs, street lighting and local parks and recreation programs and minor variances should represent an area within which these are issues of significant concern.
- In communities where citizen organizations and neighbourhood associations are not well-established or supported, or in rural areas where large distances between homes makes neighbourhood organizations difficult to maintain, community councils may provide a valued forum for the expression of local issues and concerns.
- There is a particular difficulty in including major commercial districts or other areas of regional significance within a community council district, since matters which arise in these areas are of interest to the entire municipality. This issue has arisen in Halifax, where the councillor for downtown Halifax has refused to sit on a community council on the grounds that the downtown is of interest to all Haligonians, not just those who live and work there.

In large municipalities, with a generally consistent level of urbanization and wards with large populations represented by a single councillor, it is not clear that the creation of community councils adds value to the political process that could not be achieved in other ways, including effective, representative and accountable neighbourhood committees.

7. Neighbourhood Committees

Neighbourhood committees are mechanisms for involving citizens who are not members of council in the process of government at the neighbourhood level; they can exist with a variety of forms of municipal government and are not tied to a structure of community councils.

A working definition for neighbourhood committees which is broad enough to encompass the range of examples found in the case studies was established. This working definition describes a neighbourhood committee as a local citizens organization which:

(i) is recognized as representing a defined neighbourhood or local community of interest;

(ii) is given specific advisory and/or consultative responsibilities by the municipal council;

(iii) may have responsibility for taking specified actions; and

(iv) may be recognized as a forum for consultation with a range of agencies and other stakeholders.

7.1 Neighbourhood Committees: Issues and Options

In Winnipeg and Halifax, neighbourhood committees are established in accordance with provincial legislation which sets out their relationship to community councils (committees). For example, the role of Winnipeg's Resident Advisory Groups is defined in the City of Winnipeg Act as follows: "A residents' advisory group shall, advise and assist the members of the community committee for which it is established and be entitled to notice of, and the right to participate in, the meetings of the community committee."

The Halifax Regional Municipality Act also links advisory sub-committees to community councils by providing that community councils may establish advisory sub-committees. The kinds of sub-committees established to date are essentially special purpose committees comprised of members selected through the common procedure of placing an ad in the newspaper and having applicants respond.

Once the concept of a neighbourhood committee is broadened to include other models which are not linked to community councils, additional options become available with respect to each of the four issues of mandate, function, boundaries and membership. The purpose of this section is to identify and provide a preliminary assessment of the options available with respect to each of these four critical issues. In addition, the following questions and observations may help to focus discussion of the potential role of neighbourhood committees:

- **Mandate:** Should neighbourhood committees be comprehensively mandated by legislation or city charter across an entire municipality and given a definite role in the overall governance structure, as is the case with New York's Community Boards? Or should they be encouraged, and allowed to form and evolve spontaneously, at the discretion of the residents of an area, as is the case with Boston's Neighbourhood Councils? Should the mandate of neighbourhood committees be limited in any way, or should they simply deal with any issues which affect the quality of life in the area they represent?

- **Function:** The functions of neighbourhood committees vary, but essentially fall into two main categories:

  1. Participation in decision-making through the provision of advice on a potentially broad range of issues (planning, policy development, budgets, service delivery, etc.); and

  2. Participation in the actual delivery of services, such as recreational programs, street clean-ups, recycling and/or the management and maintenance of community facilities, such as local parks and recreational facilities. (When service delivery or facilities management is carried out in partnership with the municipal government it is termed "co-production." The involvement of Edmonton's Community Leagues in parks and recreational facilities is a prominent Canadian example of co-production.)

  To what extent should these two functions be stressed if neighbourhood committees are established?

- **Boundaries**: Should the boundaries of Neighbourhood Committees correspond exactly to ward boundaries, or respect ward boundaries, or be defined using other criteria altogether? For example, if neighbourhood committees are to have an alternative service delivery role, for example, maintaining parks and recreation facilities or operating programs, should they be organized on the basis of where these facilities are located?

- **Membership:** Should the members of a neighbourhood committee be appointed, and if so, by whom? Should they be elected? Should they be chosen as delegates from existing associations? Or should they be selected through some combination of these options?

7.2 Three Potential Models For Neighbourhood Committees Were Identified

Three potential models of neighbourhood committees have been identified, based on practices in the case study municipalities. Short descriptions of the three models are set out below, and are summarized on Figure 7.

1. Grassroots, "bottom-up" neighbourhood committees which are based on existing voluntary neighbourhood and community associations, and are consequently flexible in terms of size and number, but which fit into a formal network organized and supported by the municipal government. (Portland's Recognized Neighbourhood Associations and District Coalitions, which are widely recognized in the U.S. for their effectiveness, provided the basis for this model.);

2. Appointed or elected advisory committees whose mandate is linked to a Community Council or Committee or other functional committee. Halifax's Advisory Sub-committees and Winnipeg's Resident Advisory Groups provide the basis for this model; and

3. Citizens' boards or councils representing local communities of interest which have a mandate established in accordance with legislation from a higher level of government and/or the municipal charter and which are not limited to advising an area-based or functional committee of council. New York's Community Boards provided the basis for this model.

FIGURE 7

NEIGHBOURHOOD COMMITTEES: THREE EXAMPLES OF SUB-MUNICIPAL, COMMUNITY-BASED STRUCTURES		
MODEL 1 **GRASSROOTS ASSOCIATIONS AND COALITIONS**	**MODEL 2** **ADVISORY BODIES LINKED TO COMMUNITY COUNCILS OR SPECIFIC COMMITTEES OR FUNCTIONS**	**MODEL 3** **FORMAL SUB-MUNICIPAL STRUCTURES WHICH ARE PART OF THE MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT'S OPERATIONS**
• NEIGHBOURHOOD/COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS WHICH MEET FORMAL CRITERIA FOR OPENNESS AND ACCOUNTABILITY • DISTRICT COALITIONS OF NEIGHBOURHOOD/ COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS (MAY INCLUDE BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS AND/OR COMMUNITY NON-PROFITS)	• ADVISORY COMMITTEES • APPOINTED AD HOC TASK FORCES AND WORKING GROUPS	• COMMUNITY BOARDS ESTABLISHED BY SENIOR GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION OR MUNICIPAL CHARTER • NEIGHBOURHOOD OR DISTRICT COUNCILS ESTABLISHED IN ACCORDANCE WITH SENIOR GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION

A key objective in identifying these models is to illustrate that there is more than one kind of neighbourhood committee. When considering of the establishment of such committees in Ontario, it is important not to assume that advisory committees similar to planning advisory committees or other special-purpose committees are the only options available.

Having said that, it would be impossible to categorize all forms of community or neighbourhood-based organizations in terms of only a limited number of specific models. The creativity of citizens and local governments, the historical context provided by differing political, cultural and social cultures and the circumstances present at the time affect the details of specific initiatives and result in a wide variety of local arrangements. Consequently, it is not surprising that the case studies summarized in the appendices to this report, as well as other cities investigated, provide examples of neighbourhood committees that do not fall neatly into one of the three categories.

For example, "Edmonton's Community Leagues", like Portland's Neighbourhood Associations, are part of a formal city-wide network. However, there are parts of Edmonton without Community Leagues, and citizens are not automatically members of a league unless they join and pay dues. In this respect, Edmonton's practices differ from Portland's, where every citizen is automatically a member of a Recognized Neighbourhood Association, and these associations are not permitted to charge dues. Consequently, Edmonton's Community Leagues might be considered a variation of Model 1, or possibly an illustration of another approach entirely.

Another variation is represented by the Paris arrondissement council. These sub-municipal structures are generally consistent with Model 3. However, they are formally linked to the city council, and their membership is a mix of city councillors and elected citizens. These councils, like some parish councils, also have mayors appointed by the council itself, but they are not considered a formal level of government.[5]

Amsterdam's 16 District Councils (Appendix "A-9") may be considered a form of neighbourhood committee generally consistent in the Model 3. However, the sub-municipal structures are more like an actual level of government, and, in fact, are recognized as municipalities for purposes of the Dutch Municipal Act.

Setting these local variances aside, what all of the models and case studies have in common is the fact that they are sub-municipal structures whose members constitute additional participants in the local governance system. In some instances neighbourhood committees also have operational responsibilities for certain local facilities, such as neighbourhood parks and recreation centres, and for neighbourhood services, such as minor park maintenance or community policing programs. (The term used to describe joint community-municipal partnership in the provision and/or operation of facilities and services is "co-production." The role of Edmonton's Community Leagues in the provision of recreational facilities and programs is a significant example of co-production.)

7.3. Neighbourhood Committees: Assessing The Models

The following discussion of the three models from Figure 7, including references to the cities on which they are based, identifies the pros and cons of each approach.

---

[5] In general, European citizens seem less concerned with establishing whether or not an elected or appointed body is or is not government. The fact of being in or out of government, however, is an extremely important consideration in the U.S., and perhaps, as suggested by the reactions heard in the Institute's Roundtables, in Canada as well.

7.3.1 Model No. 1: Neighbourhood Committees Based On Recognized Neighbourhood Associations

This model involves the creation of a formally constituted District or Area Coalition comprised of delegates from neighbourhood associations which have been formally recognized as meeting criteria adopted by Council. The criteria would address issues of openness, accountability and accessibility. All residents would automatically become members of the Recognized Neighbourhood Association for the area in which they live.

Membership in a District Coalition could include:

1. Representatives of recognized neighbourhood associations[6] within the district;
2. Representatives of other organizations in the district, such as Business Improvement Area or other non-resident community associations;
3. In a municipality with electoral districts or wards, the local councillor might participate as an ex officio non-voting member.

In addition to Portland (Appendix "A-8"), St. Paul, Albuquerque and Seattle have neighbourhood committees similar to this model.

Advantages of Model 1 include:

- The benefits resulting from the ability to build on history, knowledge, experience, contacts and skills of existing associations and organizations.
- A degree of independence from electoral politics and the preferences of individual councillors because members are selected by and from associations with roots in the community.

Assistance in resolving conflicts with and among existing residents associations since they are part of the structure.

---

[6] Portland's criteria for a Recognized Neighbourhood Association are generally as follows:
- that the association's membership is open anyone who lives within the boundaries of the area which the association represents
- that the association's boundaries are set out in its by-laws and do not overlap those of any other association represented on the Ward Council
- that the association's by-laws have appropriate non-discrimination provisions
- that no fee is charged for membership and any dues or contributions are collected on a voluntary basis only
- that public notice is given of all meetings of the association and times and procedures for electing officers and representative(s) to the Ward Council
- that decision-making procedures are set out in formal by-laws which are consistent with the bylaws of the Ward Council;

Potential difficulties with Model 1 include:

- Extensive time and consultation required to determine boundaries, if these do not correspond to ward boundaries;
- Time and consultation required to formulate and gain acceptance for criteria related to representativeness, accountability and accessibility;
- Likely inequalities in terms of experience and resources among existing neighbourhood associations suggest the need for community development and attention to the special needs of certain neighbourhoods;
- The difficulty of achieving comparable membership numbers in districts or wards where there are many existing associations, and those where are few or none.

7.3.2 Model No. 2: Neighbourhood Committees As Appointed Advisory Committees

This model involves the creation of an advisory committee which can either be appointed on a ward basis by the local councillor, or, following procedures similar to those now in place with respect to existing advisory committees and boards, by the community council for the area in which the ward is located.

The number of members involved would have to be large enough to ensure that the Advisory Committee is satisfactorily representative of the ward's population, but it would be up to the appointing official or authority to ensure that the membership was representative of its constituency, including, if considered appropriate, local business associations and/or other community organizations.

Consideration might be given to appointing more than one advisory committee. Halifax community councils, for example, are beginning to establish separate advisory committees for planning, heritage, transit and other specialized interests.

The ward councillor might also be an ex officio (voting or non-voting) member.

Community councils in Halifax are appointing advisory committees and in Winnipeg the RAGs are advisory committees but are not appointed.

Advantages of Model 2 include:

- The committees reinforce and support the individual councillor or community council.
- The councillor or community council can act as a catalyst and facilitate continuity of the neighbourhood committee.
- Neighbourhood committees based on this model could be put in place fairly quickly.

- The approach is familiar.

Potential difficulties with Model 2 include:

- Members of an appointed Advisory Committee might become--or be perceived to be--disproportionately dependent on the appointing official or body as opposed to its citizen constituency, possibly leading to the committee becoming increasingly isolated and irrelevant.

- An on-going relationship of accountability of the individual appointee to constituents and organizations in the ward might be difficult to maintain.

- An appointed advisory committee which became isolated from its constituency, as many Planning Advisory Committees appear to have become, could be considered irrelevant, a situation which would breed cynicism on the part of the citizenry in the mechanisms intended to encourage participation in the new government. Efforts to establish Neighbourhood Councils in Boston have resulted in such conflicts.

7.3.3 Model No. 3: Neighbourhood Committees As Community Boards

Model 3 is based on New York's system of Community Boards. The geographic boundaries of community districts represented by this kind of neighbourhood committee would be defined on the basis of shared history, geography and identity, as well as other considerations, such as logical service districts. They would intentionally not be based on ward boundaries.

The community districts used for New York City's Community Boards vary in size from populations of about 100,000, up to populations of 250,000, primarily in order to ensure that each corresponds to a reasonable catchment area for major services. An important objective in this regard is the creation of decentralized integrated service districts.[7]

Because community districts defined in this way might include more than one or even more than two wards, and because the community district is intended to be relatively uninfluenced by political jurisdictional boundaries, the districts would most appropriately be approved by Council as a whole, based on advice and recommendations from staff and the public.

In terms of how membership would be determined, it is not possible for Ontario municipalities to follow the New York City model exactly, since the New York approach involves the appointment of Community Board members by the Borough President, for which there is no equivalent position in Ontario. As an alternative, membership might be based on representation from neighbourhood associations, as in Model 1, or members might be appointed by the appropriate area councillor(s) or community council. Alternatively, they could be elected.[8]

---

[7] According to the 1975 revisions to New York City Charter regarding Community Boards, community districts were to be defined which should "(1) so far as feasible, lie within the boundaries of a single borough and coincide with historic, geographic and identifiable communities from which the city has developed; (2) be suitable for the efficient and effective delivery of services by municipal agencies to be made coterminous with the community districts...; (3) be compact and contiguous and be within a populations range of one hundred thousand to two hundred fifty thousand persons." (Pecorella, 1994, pp. 129-130)

In addition to New York City, Dayton, Ohio also has a citizen participation program based on community boards, where they are called Priority Boards. Dayton has at large elections, and so is not divided into wards. Consequently, there is no issue of a lack of congruence with ward boundaries.

Advantages of Model 3 include:

- Provided they were given the necessary support, respect and responsibility, neighbourhood committees based on this approach could ensure a strong, independent community voice and serve as an effective link between neighbourhood and council.
- This model could facilitate the establishment of integrated community based service districts. In New York the achievement of "co-terminality" of community boards and integrated service districts has been an important objective.

Potential difficulties of Model 3 include:

- Neighbourhood committees with the degree of prominence and independence associated with this approach might be perceived as a threat to politicians and existing associations.
- As indicated from the results of the Roundtable discussion groups, this model is likely to be perceived as particularly American, and therefore unsuited to an Ontario context. The emphasis on checks and balances, and the intentional separation of the neighbourhood committee from political jurisdictions may be seen as inconsistent with a Canadian attitude to local government.
- The fact that boundaries for wards and neighbourhood committees are not co-terminous could be confusing for residents.

7.5 Neighbourhood Committees: Considerations For Toronto

Over the years since the City of Toronto was first incorporated, annexations and amalgamations have erased older municipal boundaries within what is now Metro Toronto. However, the names of these old municipalities, such as Swansea, Forest Hill, Leaside, Mimico and Agincourt still have meaning as a way of referring to local communities. In addition, Metro Toronto is characterized by the existence of other clearly identified neighbourhoods which do not always correspond to these earlier municipal boundaries, but have been shaped by significant natural features, such as, rivers, creeks, and ravines; major barriers, such as highways or railway corridors; cultural and ethnic identities; school districts; significant public buildings; and local shopping and business districts.

---

[8] There is an interesting and detailed discussion of the pros and cons or appointment versus election of Community Board members in the book entitled ***Community Power in Postreform City Politics in New York City*** (Pecorella, 1994).

Neighbourhoods defined in both ways have often influenced the boundaries of neighbourhood planning districts, which have, in turn, strengthened the identities of the neighbourhoods, often enshrining them in secondary plans, district zoning bylaws and development guidelines, or other special districts. Community centres, parks and major recreational facilities also are closely associated with neighbourhoods, and strengthen neighbourhood identities by their presence.

Collectively, these varied sources of neighbourhood identity reflect the patterns of everyday urban life. In that respect, they differ from electoral districts where identity and social cohesion may be factors, but where numerical considerations present a significant constraint. Since municipal ward boundaries must ensure equitable representation in terms of the number of electors.

In addition to a strong sense of neighbourhood and community, Metro Toronto has a tradition of neighbourhood and community associations. For example:

- There are 332 organizations on the City of Toronto's 1996 list of Residents and Ratepayer Associations. This list is compiled from information provided voluntarily to the City Clerk, and includes some business and special interest associations;
- Without taking into account tenant, business and special interests community organizations, North York maintains a list of registered Ratepayers' Associations which includes 67 associations representing 9,310 households.[9]
- The City of Etobicoke maintains lists of community associations which currently include 38 ratepayer associations, six BIA's and 20 special interest community associations;
- The City of Scarborough lists 40 residents and community associations;
- The Borough of East York community association lists include 15 Ratepayers' and Tenants' Associations and 12 BIA and other business representatives;
- The City of York's list of ratepayer associations includes 20 organizations, exclusive of any business, tenant or special interest associations.

The existence of a strong sense of community identity and well-established and effective neighbourhood associations was clearly expressed at the Institute's Roundtable meetings.

---

[9] North York is the only Metro municipality which has a council-approved process for registering ratepayer associations. (Policy #41-7) As initially authorized in June, 1988, and reconfirmed twice since then, in order to qualify as a "registered" ratepayer association and be included in North York's official registry, associations, excluding condominium or tenants associations, must register annually with the city, represent not less than 25 paid households; submit with their registration application the names and addresses of at least 25 households, hold a general meeting at least once every twelve months, hold an annual election of officers, and keep the Public Information Office advised of the names and addresses of all officers.

However, there also emerged at these meetings a sense that existing neighbourhood associations do not reflect the full diversity of Metro's population, and that informal connections and networks are not as developed in poorer, less-established communities as they are in middle-class neighbourhoods.

Concerns about the representation and accountability of neighbourhood associations is addressed in **The Rebirth of Urban Democracy** (Berry, Portney and Thomson, 1993), where the authors note that neighbourhood associations can do a great deal "to keep the city and its participation system honest," but go on to ask: "Even if these leaders (of existing neighbourhood associations) remain public-spirited, what evidence do we have that they remain responsive to neighbourhood residents?" Metro Toronto's systems of citizen participation and the consultation methods used by city staff have not changed much in the past 20 to 25 years, nor have the primary motivations for establishing and maintaining community organizations and neighbourhood associations.

Faced with threats to the status quo, homeowner and residents associations and community activists have been able to marshal resistance effectively, and, as was the case in community battles against expressways and excessive urban redevelopment in the 1970's, to achieve significant successes. It is not clear if there would be a comparable interest in influencing decisions regarding aspects of local government whose impacts are less immediate in their impact on the community environment. Such issues could be budgets and service delivery, which are likely to present more significant issues than development in the foreseeable future.

The strong neighbourhoods and sense of community that characterizes Metro Toronto, together with the number of existing associations, suggests that Model 1 may provide a starting point for a possible alternative to the advisory committee/ad hoc task force/working committee approach (Model 2) which has generally been used in Metro.

Adapting Model 1, which is based on a city of 500,000, to a city of 2.4 million would be a challenge and would certainly take time. However, the adaptation of this model to a city of 3.5 million people is being considered in Los Angeles. (See Appendix "A-6")

On the other hand, Model 3, based on the New York community board approach, is clearly adaptable to a city of 2.4 million people. It is associated with a concerted and apparently effective approach to decentralized and integrated service delivery, and we believe it is worth considering in the context of a restructured Toronto. Again, it is essential to note that this system took time to implement, notwithstanding that it was based on an earlier tradition of decentralized community planning boards.

In summary, an important question presented by Bill 103 is whether the new city's citizens, community associations, other stakeholders and elected politicians have the interest and energy to explore other, more formal kinds of neighbourhood-based organizational structures, with the objective of ensuring more representative and accountable community involvement in a broader range of municipal issues. The new city presents an opportunity to explore whether improvements can be made to council structure, the system of community and citizen participation system and the rationalization and integration of its service delivery systems.

7.6 Summary Of Findings Concerning Neighbourhood Committees

The following summary of findings related to neighbourhood committees is based on the background research for this report, including both written material and interviews.

- Neighbourhood committees exist in different forms in many jurisdictions around the world.
- The experience from other jurisdictions suggests that an expansion in the scope of community participation through the creation of a comprehensive system of active neighbourhood committees could increase civic involvement in Toronto.
- Neighbourhood committees can create additional opportunities for formal citizen participation in municipal government and add direct participants to the local governance system, to supplement elected politicians.
- Existing stakeholders sometimes resist mechanisms that broaden the base of participation to include new groups. (Those who have a voice do not always recognize that others do not have an effective communication channel.) However, neighbourhood committees provide an important opportunity for minority points of view to be heard.
- Often neighbourhoods that have the greatest need of more civic representation are the ones that have the most difficulty initiating actions and recruiting volunteers to participate in neighbourhood committees.
- Neighbourhood committees can perform a useful role in providing an efficient interface between staff and citizens.
- Neighbourhood committees need staff and council support to succeed.
- The transition from an existing structure of ratepayers groups to a more formal structure needs to be managed in a way that maintains existing volunteer interest and support, while adding to it.

8. Input from Roundtable Discussions

Following a period of initial investigation and research, the Institute organized five Roundtable meetings to present and hear reactions to its work to date into Community Councils and Neighbourhood Committees. The Roundtables were seen as a means of (i) ensuring that the Institute's research was addressing issues of concern to citizens and other stakeholders in the southern GTA; (ii) testing the ideas emerging from the Institute's initial research; and iii) identifying any issues and concerns that required further research. Participants were invited from published lists of those with demonstrated interest in neighbourhood issues. Many were officers or members of ratepayers groups.

8.1 Organization of Roundtables

The schedule of Roundtables was as follows:

March 26, 1997	St. Lawrence Hall, Toronto
March 26, 1997	The Spectator, Hamilton
April 7, 1997	North York Public Library, North York
April 8, 1997	Montgomery Inn, Etobicoke
April 15, 1997	Centennial Room, Markham Civic Centre, Markham.

Laurel Butman, a community activist and long-time participant in a Portland Neighbourhood Association; and Adrian Joyce, Chair of Community Board No.7 in Queens New York, participated in the first two Roundtables.

All five of the Roundtables included short presentations by John Farrow and Eudora Pendergrast on the Institute's work. A short background information piece, including a summary of the Institute's interim findings, as well as information regarding Portland's Office of Neighbourhood Associations and New York's Community Boards, were distributed to all those who attended.

After the presentations, time was allotted for questions, and for responses to issues and comment. The proceedings were taped and transcripts produced, but those attending were advised of this in advance and confidentiality was assured.

8.2 Questions And Comments At The Roundtables

The focus of discussion was on questions and comments in response to the presentations, and also concerns about the impacts of amalgamation, which was generally seen as endangering informal systems and organizations put in place over many years.

8.2.1 Portland, New York and the Experiences of Other Cities

- The Institute's opening presentation emphasized that neighbourhood committees in other municipalities deal with a range of issues to ensure on-going citizen input into decisions regarding budgets and service delivery as well as planning issues.
- There was interest in the experiences of other cities, especially in the sessions attended by representatives from Portland and New York. In particular,

The small size of Portland's council - four councillor/commissioners and a mayor, all elected at large - was one aspect of Portland's governance system which participants found intriguing.

The broad range of issues dealt with at community board meetings and the nature of the working relationships between the boards, the borough president, the city council citizens and ratepayer groups (referred to by Mr. Joyce as "civics") received particular attention in terms of Mr. Joyce's presentation.

Both Ms. Butman and Mr. Joyce were questioned and received comments about the extent of volunteer labour required to maintain the citizen-based structures in their cities.

- The extensive time commitment required for voluntary work on local issues and the difficulties experienced in maintaining citizen interest and engagement over the long term were identified as facts of life for neighbourhood associations in the two U.S. cities and Metro municipalities.
- The importance and difficulties of addressing serious social problems, such as prostitution and drug use in the community, were noted as being common to many cities.
- The need to allow for the inevitable burn out of long-term volunteers, and to introduce new members in order to replace those who withdraw was also a common issue.
- The fact that neighbourhood associations, as well as individual participants, inevitably go through alternating periods of activity and dormancy was recognized as a common experience.
- Notwithstanding the interest in Portland and New York at the Roundtable sessions attended by Ms. Butman and Mr. Joyce, the opinion was expressed at other sessions that initiatives developed elsewhere would likely not be appropriate in an Ontario context without adaptation. Particular skepticism about the usefulness of U.S. models and practices in a Canadian setting was expressed.

8.2.2 Impacts of Amalgamation

The Institute clarified at the outset of each meeting that it had no position on the subject of amalgamation, and that community councils and neighbourhood committees might well be worthy of consideration even if amalgamation did not proceed. However, concerns about municipal restructuring and its impact on effective participation were on the minds of many participants. The following were key comments and concerns in this regard.

- Representatives of existing residents associations are concerned that community councils and neighbourhood committees will not be satisfactory replacements for the political representation provided by existing municipal councils.

- Representatives of volunteer citizens organizations feel that their groups cannot reasonably be expected to fill the service delivery gaps resulting from reduced funding and downsizing.

- A key concern of citizens and community groups in terms of participation in local government decision-making is direct access to the local ward councillor regarding issues of concern to the community. It is widely assumed that an increase in the ratio of people represented to elected councillors will make direct access to the ward councillor more difficult and participation less likely to result in desired outcomes.

- The creation of one large council to replace six local and one metro council raises concerns for several participants about the ability of a local councillor to influence the outcome of the final vote on an issue. "You may get your councillor on side, but then he loses to all the others at council." This problem is seen as likely to increase with a larger council representing a larger and more diverse urban area.

- The implications of amalgamation for existing citizens organizations were raised and the merits of moving from the current informal arrangements to more formal structures was debated. Some favoured the status quo, while others favoured the evolution to a more structured situation.

- More than one participant stated that pre-amalgamation Metro was fine and did not require any additional mechanisms to promote citizen participation or consultation.

8.2.3 Community Councils

- Those most interested in the concept of community councils were specifically interested in what powers the community councils would have. The view expressed by a number of participants was that these powers should correspond as closely as possible to the powers of existing municipalities.

- The view was expressed that community councils should be able to formulate policy, and not be limited to advising on local issues and monitoring local service delivery.

- Several participants were concerned that community councils (and neighbourhood committees) sounded like just another level of government.

- One participant suggested that community councils should be funded so that they would be able to pursue appeals at the OMB.

- There was a suggestion that the existing city halls be maintained as locations for community council meetings. In this context, several people commented on the difficulty of having to travel to downtown Toronto to attend committee and council meetings.

8.2.4 Neighbourhood Committees

- The need to make participation efficient, effective and rewarding for volunteers was a consistent theme at all sessions.

- There was interest in citizen participation and community empowerment initiatives in other cities, particularly at the sessions attended by Ms. Butman and Mr. Joyce. However, there was also skepticism about the effectiveness of neighbourhood committees which rely on volunteers who are already stretched in terms of time and energy.

- The need to replace or supplement existing citizen associations was questioned. If the intention is to have more effective citizen participation, why not support existing organizations? One participant suggested a per diem for residents who take on the responsibility for maintaining effective neighbourhood associations.

- One participant had done a study which found that participants in Metro resident and ratepayer associations were disproportionately white, middle-class homeowners, and felt that this issue would have to be addressed if neighbourhood committees were to become a more formal part of the governance structure. This point was acknowledged by several different participants. The concern was that such groups are typically motivated by the desire to protect property rights and neighbourhood amenities. One participant referred to this aspect of ad hoc citizens and residents associations as the "dark side" of community activism.

- One participant observed that the Institute's opening presentation had noted that neighbourhood committees in other cities are frequently concerned with social justice and equity issues, and questioned to what extent existing residents and community groups address these issues.

- There were also questions and discussion related to the need to involve residents of less affluent areas, immigrants and non-English-speaking neighbourhoods. Techniques for involving new Canadians were suggested and discussed.

- There was recognition and discussion of the fact that middle class homeowners are able to raise funds to fight property-related battles at city council and the OMB, while poorer citizens and those less confident of their place in the community for other reasons did not have these kinds of private resources to draw on.

- Representatives from poorer neighbourhoods expressed concerns about funding and the capacity to address a multitude of issues.

- Concern was expressed unorganized about neighbourhoods, which have few or no residents or other community associations. Some thought they should be helped, others thought such neighbourhoods would organize when the time was right.

- The need for neighbourhood committees to be accountable to all members of the area represented was raised, and questions were posed regarding effective techniques for ensuring that the interests of everyone in an area covered by a neighbourhood committee were recognized and represented.

- There was suspicion about the motives for suggesting the creation of un-funded neighbourhood committees which would have to rely on the unpaid efforts of volunteers. One participant asked, "Is this what the voluntary sector is all about?"
- There were questions about the extent to which neighbourhood committees received funding in the U.S. and elsewhere. One participant stated that any level of funding allocated to a neighbourhood association or committee was sufficient to make the organization a level of government. Some favoured funding, others strongly opposed it.
- There was a strong sense that elected and salaried councillors and staff should be responsible for ensuring that neighbourhood interests are understood and respected.

8.3 Observations Arising From The Roundtable Discussions

The preceding summary identifies issues discussed and comments heard at the Roundtable meetings, grouped under general headings without a reference to chronological or any other order. In the meetings themselves, there is clearly a measure of repetition, as well as, subtle variations in terms of the perspective and context for the comments. Appendix "C" contains more detailed notes from each of the Roundtables, based on a longer transcript of the recorded proceedings. The purpose of this section is to present three key observations from the Institute, based on our interpretation of what we heard at the meetings and in conversations with those attending, including our U.S. visitors.

- **The process of change is difficult and successful transitions require building bridges between "what is" and "what could be".**

  Our first observation involves the difficulties inherent in adapting to change. Residents, neighbourhood associations and other stakeholder groups have, often with great effort extending over many years, built relationships with their local government which usually involve personal and informal lines of communication with a local councillor and staff. A major restructuring of local government, particularly one which includes a reduction in the number of councils as well as councillors, disrupts networks, relationships and understandings on which informal community engagement in local government is traditionally based. The extent of this disruption should be recognized in managing the transition to an amalgamated city, and efforts should be made to secure good working relationships with community leaders and neighbourhood associations during the transition to new structures.

  On the other hand, the need for a greater degree of representation in citizen-based organizations and the potential value of more formal structures in addressing the interests and needs of unaffiliated and less privileged citizens appear to be real issues that need to be addressed. Unsolicited changes faced by existing neighbourhood associations and community groups as the result of amalgamation may also provide opportunities to create new community-based structures which are more accessible to and representative of a diverse population.

- **Citizens become involved in community-based structures when and if they see results.**

  A second observation is that effective community involvement and meaningful citizen participation depend on the ability to achieve and to see results. Unless citizens can see successes as the result of their volunteer efforts, they are unlikely to become involved except in the face of direct threats to their immediate environments. Time-consuming meetings called to obtain "citizen input" which is not and/or can not be seen to influence outcomes will be poorly attended and opportunities to achieve collaborative objectives will be lost.

  New mechanisms for citizen participation and community involvement, such as formal neighbourhood committees, will understandably be treated with suspicion unless they are, and are seen to be, genuinely intended to produce effective results for those whose time and energy will be required to make them work.

- **Community organizations and neighbourhood associations are an important resource which should be supported for practical as well as political reasons.**

  One of the most impressive aspects of the presentations on Portland and New York was the extent to which the municipal administrations and political leaders of both cities--notwithstanding their different sizes and cultures--have actively supported the creation of the neighbourhood-based community structures as part of the overall system of municipal governance. Many of the cities included in the case studies have departments or units dedicated to building strong neighbourhoods and enhancing community resources within the mayor's office. Municipal restructuring provides an appropriate framework to assess the possibility of a more formal focus on neighbourhoods and community issues and needs.

9. Concluding Observations Concerning Community Committees And Neighbourhood Committees

The sources for this report are numerous and diverse. In addition, as noted on more than one occasion during the Roundtable discussions, extracting practical lessons from other places is a challenging exercise. Nevertheless, previous sections of this report have set out relatively detailed findings, based on the Institute's research and the Roundtables, which may help to focus further consultation in an Ontario context. These findings have been used to develop a few concluding observations on whether and/or how community councils and neighbourhood committees might be implemented in the context of local government restructuring. These observations are set out below.

9.1 Community Councils

- In a highly urbanized situation where wards are large and each councillor represents tens of thousands of people, community councils may not be an effective means over the long term for ensuring that local community concerns are satisfactorily identified and addressed. Similarly, these area-based structures may not enhance citizen involvement in city-wide issues and initiatives, particularly if the municipal structure includes both community councils and functional committees.

- It is possible that a community council structure based on Model 2 (Amalgamated Municipal Federation) could be developed for the new City of Toronto. However, careful consideration would have to be given to how such a structure would respect the fundamental objectives of amalgamation.

- When smaller rural and urban communities with different levels of municipal service are combined through amalgamation or restructuring, community councils may provide a useful means of ensuring that different community values and interests are expressed and provide a mechanism to address issues related to different levels of service.

- The use of area rates to pay for different levels of service for rural and urban communities which have been amalgamated under a single level of government may not prove to be workable in practice.

- In rural situations, where municipalities cover a large area and populations are relatively small, community councils appear to be effective, particularly if there are no functional committees of council in operation.

- If community councils are implemented, the geographic area represented by a community council should be appropriate to the nature of the issues for which they are responsible in order to preserve credibility (i.e. the larger the area, the greater the responsibility).

- Because access to the local councillor representing an area is generally considered the key to effective communication between council and citizens, measures which facilitate such access may be more effective than the creation of community councils.

9.2 Neighbourhood Committees

- Neighbourhood committees and other forms of neighbourhood governance that encourage participation in local government are common world-wide.

- There are a range of options available when considering the establishment of a new neighbourhood committee structure. Appointed advisory committees and ad hoc task forces or working groups, such as those currently associated with planning and development issues, are not the only possibilities.

In this regard, formal neighbourhood-based structures established to address all issues of concern to the local community provide a useful forum for consultation, negotiation and collaborative decision-making on a range of issues and with a range of other stakeholders. It is not clear that these forums require or would benefit from the parallel establishment of community councils.

- Although Ontario municipalities have a strong legacy of citizen involvement, this tradition is closely associated with institutionalized citizen participation in the preparation of community or secondary plans and the review of development proposals. Other North American cities have developed formal arrangements to involve citizens and communities in decisions regarding budgets and service delivery, in addition to planning matters.

  These neighbourhood committees also function as forums for the resolution of community conflicts of many sorts, and for integrating citizens with a diversity of interests, identities and incomes into the community.

  The introduction of such structures into an Ontario context might also facilitate the development of more efficient and collaborative decision-making in the context of a broader role for neighbourhood organizations in the overall governance structure, including opportunities for consultation related to integrated, community-based service delivery.

- Implementation of any new neighbourhood committee structures will take time, and changes to existing informal and institutionalized arrangements should include consultation with all those affected by such changes in order to preserve interest and involvement on the part of existing volunteer participants.

9.2 Combining Community Councils And Neighbourhood Committees

- A municipal governance system based on strong and effective community councils would not appear to be compatible with efforts to establish strong and independent neighbourhood committees which have a formal role in the municipal decision-making process.

- One important factor in deciding whether to emphasize strong community councils or the creation of strong and independent neighbourhood committees is the degree of importance attached to introducing new participants into the municipal governance system.

- Decisions about community councils and neighbourhood committees should pay careful attention to the implications for integrated service delivery. In particular, the question of co-terminality of service delivery areas with community councils and/or neighbourhood committees warrants careful consideration.

- Decisions regarding community councils and neighbourhood committees will be most productively made in the context of a vision of the municipal governance system as a whole.

The research undertaken for this study has shown that municipal governments world-wide are continually innovating in response to the changing demands of citizens. The scope and richness of the ideas gained through this work has demonstrated that it is important for municipalities to monitor the developments and experience in other jurisdictions in order to best meet the needs of their residents.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX "A": CASE STUDIES

APPENDIX "A"

CASE STUDIES

The following Appendices provide summaries of information gathered from other jurisdictions whose experience seemed particularly useful in considering the potential roles and functions of community councils and neighbourhood committees in an Ontario context. Generally each city is the subject of a separate summary, although Great Britain is dealt with as a whole.

DETAILED APPENDICES:

"A-1":	Edmonton's Community Leagues
"A-2":	Halifax Regional Municipality's Community Councils
"A-3":	Winnipeg's Community Committees and Resident Advisory Groups
"A-4":	Boston's Neighbourhood Councils
"A-5":	Chicago: Less Formal Responses to Community Organizations
"A-6":	Los Angeles: Neighbourhood Difficulties and Proposed Responses
"A-7":	New York's Community Boards
"A-8":	Portland's Recognized Neighbourhood Associations and District Coalitions
"A-9":	Amsterdam's District Councils
"A-10":	Christchurch's Community Boards
"A-11":	Paris' Arrondissement Councils
"A-12":	The UK: Overview of Related Issue
"A-12.1":	Reasons for Looking at Recent Experience in the UK
"A-12.2":	Significant Events in UK Local Government Reform
"A-12.3":	Neighbourhood Committees: Parish Councils as a Form of Neighbourhood Committee:
"A-12.4":	Community Councils: Radical Decentralization in Tower Hamlets
"A-12.5":	Conclusions

"A-1": Edmonton's Community Leagues

Population: 637,422

Background/Context :

Edmonton is divided into six large wards, each of which elects two councillors. The mayor is elected at large. The council/committee structure is characterized by a strong executive committee.

Edmonton has accommodated its growth through annexation, has never been part of a two-tier system and has never undergone a comprehensive, provincially directed restructuring, although there have been serious annexation issues. Instead of regional government, Edmonton, like other Alberta municipalities, has relied on single-purpose inter-municipal bodies and inter-municipal agreements to address regional servicing and planning issues.

Community Councils? No

Neighbourhood Committees? Yes:

Although they exist independently of the municipal government structure, Edmonton's Community Leagues can be seen as an interesting form of neighbourhood committee. In addition, the long-standing relationship between Edmonton's local government and the Leagues provides an example of the co-production of municipal services whose origins pre-date contemporary investigation of opportunities for public/private non-profit partnerships.

The 140 existing community league are overseen by the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, a non-profit volunteer co-ordinating agency. More recently, in the mid-1960's, the leagues have also been organized into a city-wide system of Area Councils in order to, among other things, facilitate their interactions with the municipality.

In addition to providing recreational facilities, and addressing social, recreational and civic issues, Community Leagues, since their establishment in 1917, periodically have become involved in local politics. They have also consistently served as a consultation forum on municipal issues, particularly those related to community planning.

Case Study Summary:

As in other Canadian cities, the period between 1900 and the beginning of W.W.I was a period of immense commercial growth, accompanied by inflationary land costs, and because land on the outskirts of the city was less expensive, families began to settle there. Urban growth was actively promoted by the Board of Trade, and subdivisions appeared rapidly. However, the new residential lots the areas were physically separated from the rest of the city and services were slow to follow development.

As the speculative real estate market collapsed around 1914, the city had to deal with the consequences of scattered suburban development just at the time that revenues were falling as the result of bankruptcies. It was in this context that residents began to turn to neighbourhood associations and community organizations in order to create a sense of community and to pursue common goals. Among these were the first community leagues. As noted in Bowler and Wanchuk (1986):

> In order to counter the influence of the Board of Trade and to match the voice of other lobby groups in the city, neighbourhoods began to organize themselves into community leagues. And community leagues soon surpassed the subdivision promoter as the effective lobby on civic policy. Edmonton's neighbourhoods found their voice as the city began to attempt to come to terms with its growth.

Edmonton's first community league was established in 1917, when the first neighbourhood recreational association, with a constitution influenced by the American Neighborhood Club Movement, was established in the city. One of its first activities was to lobby the city council for better streetcar scheduling, and amenities such as electricity and sidewalks for suburban communities, demonstrating from the outset that its interests were broader than community recreation.

In 1921, on the recommendation of the 9 community leagues existing at the time, the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues (EFCL) was established as a non-profit volunteer organization intended to provide unity, cooperation and a stronger voice with City Council and other levels of government. Today, the EFCL is the umbrella organization for 140 community leagues and 12 area councils.

The primary purpose of the community leagues is to provide recreational facilities and services to Edmonton's neighbourhoods. However, in keeping with their origins as lobby groups for communities, they have also become forums for identifying and acting on neighbourhood issues and concerns, and are looked to by the City government as a means of communicating with citizens about a variety of issues.

Over the years, the Leagues and the Federation have gone through periods of conflict with the city council and a growing municipal bureaucracy. On occasion they have also attempted to field a slate of candidates for municipal elections. One means of easing these stresses was the establishment of Area Councils in 1964, a proposal that had been introduced some years earlier but was only acted on following the recommendations contained in a 1964 report entitled "How to Improve the Relationship Between the City of Edmonton Parks and Recreation Department, the Federation of Community Leagues and the Individual Community Leagues."

Although the growth associated with the oil boom of the 1970's resulted in another resurgence of political activity on the part of the Leagues, there has been no subsequent attempt to run local political candidates. The Leagues' focus on recreational and social issues has not, however, ended its role as a strong voice of Edmonton's neighbourhoods and community interests.

City policy is to make municipal land available to community leagues, with the individual league taking responsibility for the development of facilities on the site. Community league members pay modest dues, and other revenue is raised through a variety of fund-raising efforts and sponsorships. Currently, the EFCL receives annual funding of $115,000.00 from the City of Edmonton.

The area councils are based on neighbourhoods defined by the city for a range of purposes. Among other things, these councils and the EFCL provide mechanisms for citizen participation in community planning exercises and the review of development proposals.

Masson (1994) notes that although political activists in both cities are optimistic that community leagues in Edmonton and similar associations, called community organizations, in Calgary will evolve into effective political forces, there are formidable obstacles to overcome. Among the most serious of these are demographic and cultural changes which have reduced the number of volunteers available to run and administer programs.

In addition, Masson also notes that Edmonton's community leagues have come into conflict with the city's multi-cultural groups over funding. In addition, because of their focus on recreational activities and facilities, the leagues are strongest in single-family neighbourhoods, and in many respects resemble middle class ratepayer groups.

Although anyone who lives in a particular neighbourhood is eligible to join the local community league, membership requires the payment of dues. In addition, the leagues' parks and recreation activities, as well as their involvement in community safety and other neighbourhood initiatives, suggest that they have a co-production role in the provision of city services. For these reasons, the leagues perhaps stretch the Institute's definition of neighbourhood committees. However, their role in the life of Edmonton's neighbourhoods and the extent to which they are relied upon by the city as forums for consultation and advice qualify the leagues in our minds as a form of neighbourhood committee whose activities and roles in community affairs are worth keeping in mind when considering potential models for community interaction and involvement in Ontario.

The community leagues are essentially family and more specifically child oriented organizations. As a result they are vulnerable to demographic and social changes which have reduced both the number of children in some areas and the time available for volunteer contributions. Nevertheless, they are a unique example of the focus for community identity and political activity provided by recreational and social concerns. This is a matter of some interest in light of the identification of parks and recreation matters as appropriate for delegation to community councils in Toronto.

"A-2": Halifax Regional Municipality's Community Councils

Population: 330,000

Background/Context:

Provincial legislation amalgamating the municipalities of Halifax, Dartmouth, Bedford and Halifax County into Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) was enacted in March, 1995, and came into force in April 1996. The consolidated council consists of 23 councillors elected by ward, plus a mayor elected at large.

HRM's 23 councillors also sit on five community councils established by administrative order of the HRM council in accordance with the HRM Act, which requires that each community must consist of at least three polling districts (wards), and that the number of electors in a community must be at least twice the average number of electors per polling district in the regional municipality.

The HRM Act also sets out provisions whereby citizens can request the establishment of a community council and an appeal procedure if the HRM council does not act on the request.

Community Councils? Yes:

Neighbourhood Committees? Yes:

Halifax's newly established Community Councils have begun to appoint advisory committees on various matters, such as transit and the environment, and it is these kinds of advisory sub-committees that this study has identified as constituting neighbourhood committees in the context of an amalgamated Halifax. However, as set out in the Case Study Summary below, the HRM Act, drawing on provisions in the old Halifax County Act, provides for an array of community committees and advisory sub-committees, including those established by community councils.

Case Study Summary:

The amalgamation put in place as of April 1996 by the HRM Act resulted in the establishment of five community councils, with boundaries which do not correspond to the boundaries of the four municipalities. The HRM Act allows the HRM council to establish new communities and/or abolish existing ones.

The Act also provides that where not fewer than five hundred electors have requested the HRM council to establish a community council for an area and the council has refused or has not acted within one hundred and twenty days after the request, the applicants may appeal the refusal or failure to act to the Utility and Review Board. The boundaries of a community may also be altered by the council on its own motion or on application by the community council or at least one hundred electors. Appeal procedures are included if the HRM council has not acted on an application to amend community boundaries within 120 days.

Under the Act community councils are to propose budgets for any services and capital projects proposed to be financed through an area rate. However, it is the HRM council that actually levies the rates and borrows the money required for capital projects, provided it has approved the community council's proposed budgets. Once the budgets are approved, however, the community councils can, without the approval of the HRM council, vary the expenditure of funds approved by the HRM council, provided the total approved amount is not exceeded.

The powers and duties of a community council as set out in the Act include:

> (a) monitoring the provision of services to the community and, in particular, the provision of street lighting, fire protection, police protection, sidewalks, roads and streets, recreational programs, solid waste collection, parks and playgrounds and other services and the making of recommendations to the (HRM) Council respecting the appropriate level of such services, areas where additional services are required and ways in which the provision of services can be improved;
>
> (b) the establishment of one or more advisory subcommittees;
>
> (c) recommending to (HRM) Council appropriate by-laws, regulations, controls and development standards for the community;
>
> (d) recommending to (HRM) council appropriate user charges for the different parts of the community;
>
> (e) making recommendations to the (HRM) council respecting any matter intended to improve conditions in the community and, in particular, respecting inadequacies in existing services provided to the community and the manner in which these may be resolved, additional services that may be required and the manner in which the costs of these services may be raised and the adoption of policies that would allow the people of the community to participate more effectively in the governance of the community;
>
> (f) making recommendations to the (HRM) Council on any matter referred to it by the council.

Community councils are also empowered to amend land-use bylaws of the HRM in force in and applicable to the community respecting any property in the community, provided the amendments are consistent with "any municipal planning strategy of the Regional Municipality applicable to the property." When amending land-use by-laws, the community council stands in place of the HRM Council, and the "Planning Act applies with all necessary changes."

Community councils also stand in place of the HRM Council with respect to manor variances and development agreements for properties within the community. However, any development agreement that commits the HRM to the provision of any services or the expenditure or funds or commits more than 5% of the available sewer or water capacity is subject to the approval of the HRM council.

The provisions of the HRM Act governing community councils are based on similar provisions contained in the charter of Halifax County. Initially the mechanism used to give a distinct and separate voice to different communities in Halifax County was termed a community committee. Community committees had less power than community councils. Eventually the Halifax County legislation was amended, however, and Sackville, Cole Harbour-Westphal-Eastern Passage; and the Western Region were defined as separate communities which were to have community councils.

The provisions regarding community committees in Halifax County are, in fact, included in the HRM Act--in addition to the provisions regarding community councils. However, community committees can only be established where there is no community council. Two key differences between community councils and community committees in the HRM Act are:

- Community committees essentially have no duties or delegated powers, but are only advisory. In particular, community committees are not empowered to amend zoning bylaws, while community councils can, provided the amendments comply with the relevant official plan.
- Community committees are not given the responsibility of preparing operating and capital budgets.

The HRM Act does not state whether or not community committees can be comprised, either partially or in total, of citizens, as opposed to elected politicians. However, the HRM Act does include provisions for citizens advisory committees for an area within a polling district (ward). The citizens advisory committee is to consist of three members elected at a public meeting of the electors living in the area, and the councillor for the ward that includes the area.

Based on this summary, the HRM Act provides for a range of bodies to ensure that the interests and concerns of separate communities, both within wards and in areas comprised of more than one ward, are addressed.

Municipal and provincial officials involved in the drafting and implementation of the HRM Act have pointed out that community councils are generally not being advocated or established elsewhere in Nova Scotia. Legislation for the Regional Municipality of Cape Breton permits community councils, but they are not being implemented. Instead, Cape Breton is establishing community committees. The new Nova Scotia Municipal Act, which is currently being developed does not, at this stage, allow for the establishment of community councils generally throughout the province.

Notwithstanding the apparent reluctance to establish community councils elsewhere in Nova Scotia, they appear to be working effectively in Halifax, and to be a valued forum for bringing community issues before elected representatives. Several factors may influence this relatively positive experience:

- The population represented by a community council is a manageable size for promoting informal public participation during scheduled meetings. With a total population of 330,000 and 23 councillors, a community council of comprised of 3 councillors would represent approximately 43,000 people, which is close to the same size as a single ward in the new City of Toronto.
- The community councils' rules of procedure provide for a portion of every meeting to be devoted to an informal town hall type session, where citizens can address the members of the committee on any matter of local concern.
- Public access to the community council is direct; i.e., there is no mediating body between the public and the community council, such as Winnipeg's Resident Advisory Groups.
- The communities represented by the community councils reflect real differences in terms of rural and urban character and service levels.
- The regional council has not established functional standing committees of council, with the exception of a committee dealing with solid waste. This means that the community councils do not "compete" with functional standing committees that might have their own procedures for public input and debate.
- The community councils have real powers in terms of land use, in that the HRM Act permits them to enact zoning bylaws, as long as these conform to any applicable official plan.
- Halifax is able to draw on previous experience with community councils in Halifax county.

Notwithstanding this generally positive experience, there are issues and incipient difficulties to be noted:

- The use of area ratings to fund different levels of service in different communities is proving to be more difficult than anticipated. At this point, the HRM is considering the establishment of two or three different base tax rates--urban and rural and possibly suburban--which would be levied by the regional council. Area ratings could be applied in addition, but are not a sufficient mechanism alone.
- Not all councillors are willing to participate in community councils. The councillor for the Halifax CBD, for example, considers that the downtown is not a community like other communities, and has not joined a community council.
- The fact that the bylaws and official plans of the previous municipalities do not "fit" with the new community council boundaries, and that planning advisory committees have been established on the basis of areas covered by official plans is a source of some complexity and may make it difficult for community councils to become clearly identified with the areas they represent.

Community councils in Halifax provide an interesting contrast to community committees in Winnipeg, which have much more limited power, and are considerably larger in terms of the populations represented. In addition, Winnipeg has a strong Executive Policy Committee and functional standing committee system.

Should the new City of Toronto Council decide to achieve more power for its community councils, the Halifax legislation provides an interesting model. It is important to note, however, that Halifax, with a total population of 330,000 is much smaller than the new City of Toronto, and its wards and community council districts are smaller as well. The informality and accessibility of a community council meeting in

Halifax might be difficult to achieve in a community council meeting for an area corresponding to the current City of Toronto, which has a population almost twice the size of Halifax's, and much larger wards.

"A-3": Winnipeg's Community Committees and Resident Advisory Groups

Population: 606,790

Background/Context:

The first metropolitan government outside of Metro Toronto was established in Winnipeg in 1960. Unlike Metro Toronto, however, Winnipeg's Metro Council was directly elected from the outset. Intended to ensure Metro-wide thinking, this approach resulted in poor communication, competition for limited growth and outright hostility between the local municipalities and the metropolitan government.

The dysfunctional nature of the metro arrangement was one significant factor in the decision of the Province of Manitoba to amalgamate Winnipeg's metropolitan and local governments into a single Unicity structure in 1971.

In addition to unifying the competing municipalities which made up the metro federation, Unicity was also intended to provide a strong community focus and to promote decentralized citizen involvement "on a scale and intensity which exceeds by far" that which was in existence at the time. (Brownstone and Plunkett, 1983, p.45)

The two complementary mechanisms for accomplishing a community focus and enhanced citizen participation were Community Committees and Resident Advisory Groups (RAGs).

Initially, the Unicity council was comprised of 50 councillors elected by ward, and a mayor elected at large.[1] There were 13 community committees, comprised of the councillors from between three and six wards each. Ward boundaries in the 12 old municipalities were changed prior to the establishment of the communities, and the boundaries of the municipalities and the community councils were similar by did not correspond exactly. Each community committee was to be advised by a RAG, with the RAG's membership determined at an annual convention called by the community committee.

In 1975, a Committee of Review was established. Although most submissions from the public supported the retention of community committees and RAGs, the review was concerned with, among other things, the decentralized nature of the amalgamated council as the result of the existence of the community committees.

Following the 1975 review, the City of Winnipeg Act was amended in 1977. These amendments reduced the size of the council from 50 to 29, and the community committees from 13 to 6. These changes meant increases in the population of each ward, as well as in the community council districts. The community committees' responsibilities were also reduced. As a result of these changes, the initial intention to promote public access and participation through the establishment of small wards and the creation of community committees, based on the identification of "natural" communities, was undermined.

---

[1] One of the contentious issues leading up to the 1971 legislation was whether or not the mayor would be elected at large, or by the new council. The White Paper recommending amalgamation advocated both the creation of a strong cabinet-like executive and the election of the mayor by council, with the intention of creating a more parliamentary system of government. The legislation, however, did not include the election of the mayor by council from within its membership, a decision which some consider undermined the initial Unicity vision from the outset.

Another Unicity review was initiated in 1984. The review committee's 1986 report, the Cherniak Report, found a lack of leadership on the council, and confusion about the workings of the municipal system. It recommended that significant powers be transferred to an executive committee to be chaired by the mayor, that standing committees be eliminated and that the community committees be given increased powers, including the power to approve local plans and enact zoning bylaws.

A White Paper issued by the provincial government in 1987 did not endorse all of the recommendations in the Cherniak Report. Specifically, it refused the recommendation that standing committees be eliminated. It also recommended that the executive committee include the chairs of the six community committees. Although it went along with increased power for the community committees, it did not endorse any increase in resources.

No action was taken on the Cherniak Report or the 1987 White Paper, until after a provincial election which replaced the NDP with a minority Conservative government in the late 1980's. The new government appointed a Wards Review Committee in 1991, with the instruction that it should recommend a new Unicity council of between 12 and 15 members. In 1992 the City of Winnipeg Act was amended again, and, based on new larger wards, the council was decreased to 15, and the community committees to 5. The community committees' powers were not increased and their chairs do not sit on the city executive.

Community Councils? Yes: Community Committees

Neighbourhood Committees? Yes: Resident Advisory Groups

Case Study Summary:

The community committees put in place by the 1971 City of Winnipeg Act were seen primarily as instruments of citizen participation which were to function in association with the RAGs. The community committees would provide a forum of elected politicians to address local concerns, but it was assumed that representation of the community and participation in the committee meetings would be facilitated by the RAGs. Some 25 years later, the duties of the community committees are still defined in the City of Winnipeg Act as follows:

> 36. Each community committee shall develop and implement techniques
>
> (a) to maintain the closest possible communication between the city and the residents of the community, and shall carry out and ensure that the

residents are given full opportunity to represent their views on policies programs, budgets and delivery of services;
(b) to provide the residents of the community with information concerning existing and potential city policies, programs and budgets so as to facilitate their input concerning these matters; and

(c) to make the fullest and best use of the residents' advisory group for the community, in providing advice and assistance to the community committee in the committees consideration of plans, developments under Part 20, or proposed plans of subdivision, or any amendment, repeal or replacement of them.

As the preceding summary of the history of amendments to the Act has indicated, by 1992 the community committees had very few powers, notwithstanding previous recommendations that these powers be increased. Today, the duties of the community committees, which were primarily advisory at the outset, but did include the ability to make decisions on minor variances and on issues of exclusively local concern regarding traffic, parks and other local services such as libraries, have been substantially reduced. Minor variances are now dealt with by a Board of Adjustment, and are no longer a responsibility of the community committees, and the committees' formal planning responsibilities include no decision-making authority. They hold public hearings on rezonings that do not require official plan amendments, but all rezonings must move through the functional standing committee system before being dealt with by council.

In interviews conducted as part of this study, Winnipeg's community committees received mixed reviews. According to the current deputy mayor, they have very little reason to exist. In addition, there is general agreement that the RAGs have been a failure in terms of enhancing public participation. It is possible to draw the following conclusions concerning the community committee/RAG structure.

- The original communities were recognized as having a sense of identity and history, and were generally small enough to create a sense of community participation. However, the wards and the community committee districts are now much larger and are not associated with unified and identifiable communities. Both of these factors mitigate against a sense of community identity and effective participation.
- The RAGs never received sufficient funding, administrative, political or staff support. These factors have only become worse over the years, with the result that the RAGs today have no separate funding.
- The community committees do not have meaningful responsibilities. Even those originally delegated have been substantially reduced as the result of increased delegation to senior staff, in consultation with the ward councillor. (Local stop signs and lay-bys, for example, are dealt with in this way.)
- The fact that Winnipeg has a system of functional standing committees and a strong executive committee also reduces the impact of the community committees.

- The process for establishing RAGs was intentionally left quite flexible. The result has increasingly been a sense of uncertainty about who serves and who they represent. At present, there are only three RAGs, and membership on these three is sparse and erratic.
- There is evidently not an effective system for ensuring that RAG members have time to review the material on which they might comment to the community committees.

One former councillor interviewed in the course of preparing this report felt that there was value in the community committees in that they provided a mechanism for holding councillors publicly accountable for their decisions. All others interviewed supported the more common view that Winnipeg's community committees and RAGs may have made sense in theory, but in practice they have been ineffective. To the extent that they do not deliver the community empowerment that they promised in theory, they can be seen as not simply ineffective, but debilitating in their impact on citizen involvement in local affairs.

In considering the situation in the new City of Toronto, Winnipeg's experience should be taken into account. The creation of community councils which represent large areas, but have very limited responsibilities, does not bode well. In this regard, it is worth noting that both the existing City of Toronto is close to the same size as Winnipeg's Unicity, and North York is not much smaller.

The failed attempt to enhance citizen participation in local government through a dual structure of community committees and RAGs is also instructive. The absence of respect, support and funding led inevitably to a sense that the RAGs had no real purpose and no responsibilities.

In view of the current effectiveness of community councils in Halifax, differences between Halifax and Winnipeg are also instructive. It is, however, important to note that Halifax is even smaller than Winnipeg, and the factors which seem likely to account for the seeming success to date in Halifax include the existence of community councils small enough to ensure informal participation.

"A-4": Boston's Neighbourhood Councils

Population: 575,000

Background/Context:

Boston, the capital of Massachusetts, is located in Suffolk County, and comprises about 90% of the county's population. The city is divided into 9 wards. There are 13 councillors in all, one from each ward, and four elected at large. The mayor is also elected at large.

Community councils? No

Neighbourhood Committees? Yes

Case Study Summary:

Approximately 10 years ago, at the initiative of the previous mayor, Mayor Ray Flynn, Boston City Council endorsed a proposal to encourage the creation of Neighbourhood Councils. These are voluntary advisory bodies recognized by the Council as speaking for the areas they represent on a broad range of issues. However, in contrast to New York's community Boards, they do not have a legislated mandate and are not recognized in the city charter. In addition, the city has not been divided into a system of neighborhood districts, and there are parts of the city that are not included in one of the seven existing Neighborhood Councils.

Most of the neighbourhoods which do have councils correspond to older communities or small towns that were annexed over the years to create the City of Boston as it exists today. Sometimes the boundaries of the old communities--which are generally recognized but also can be determined from historical records--correspond fairly closely to a city ward, but there is no attempt to match each neighbourhood to a ward.

The Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services is responsible for, among other things, assisting in the establishment of Neighbourhood Councils and for their on-going support. The Office has about 25 staff members. Each neighbourhood co-ordinator is responsible for working with the Neighbourhood Councils in the districts for which she/he is responsible. (Jamaica Plain and West Roxbury, for example, have the same neighbourhood co-ordinator.)

The neighbourhood co-ordinators attend the council's monthly meetings and assist with elections, the preparation of agendas, mailings and newsletters, and provide other support services as necessary. The co-ordinators also work with smaller neighbourhood associations, and are involved in other community programs, such as neighborhood crime prevention.

Boston's Neighbourhood Councils can be either elected or appointed, or some combination of both. The West Roxbury Neighbourhood Council is appointed by the mayor, but other councils elect members. The Charlestown Neighbourhood Council, which represents an area which generally corresponds to Boston's Ward 1 and has a population of approximately 15,000, is made up of 21 neighbourhood representatives chosen as follows:

- 7 members are elected at large in the ward;
- 7 members are elected by precinct; and
- these 14 select one representative each from each of seven non-profit community organizations within the ward, based on applications submitted by the organizations wanting to be represented.

Approximately 1,000 people voted in the last Charlestown Neighbourhood Council election.

Membership in the Neighbourhood Council for West Roxbury, which has a population of about 30,000, for the most part is based on participation in residents, business and non-profit associations. Typically, people known in the community as the result of their involvement in these smaller and generally more specialized associations and who want to serve on the neighbourhood council gather petitions of at least 25 names. The Mayor, through the Office of Neighbourhood Services, is then asked to appoint from the list of those presenting petitions.

The Neighbourhood Council for Jamaica Plain, which has a population of about 41,000, was originally appointed, but more recently has decided to hold elections.

City Council members or their representatives usually attend meetings of the Neighbourhood Councils in their wards, but do not vote.

Issues dealt with by a Neighbourhood Council include any matters of concern to the residents of the area. In terms of their interactions with City council, hey are asked to comment on rezonings, development proposals, liquor and business licenses and other applications affecting the area. The councils also provide a forum for consultation with other levels of government and agencies. For example, the Department of Transportation, consulted with affected Neighbourhood Councils concerning the implementation of the Boston Central Artery project.

The Neighbourhood Councils do not replace smaller neighbourhood associations, ratepayer groups and civic associations, which are quite active, especially in middle-class, predominantly single-family neighbourhoods. On occasion, a Neighbourhood Council may request neighbourhood services' staff to assist in organizing a local group to address a particular issue. In general, where Neighbourhood Councils are active, they provide a key forum for addressing neighbourhood issues, and, according to staff of the Neighbourhood Services Department, provide a useful and valued instrument for effective consultation.

In general, the effectiveness of the Neighbourhood Councils depends on the interest, involvement and commitment of community members. The level of involvement, in turn, depends on a sense of accomplishment and effectiveness.

"A-5": Chicago: Less Formal Responses to Community Organizations

Population: 2,900,000

Background/Context:

Chicago is a single tier municipality within Cook County. The Chicago city council is comprised of 50 councillors elected by ward, and a mayor elected at large. The municipal system is a "weak mayor" system.

Although it is part of Cook County, Chicago has a single unitary council, and essentially provides its own services, with the Cook County providing only the minimum required of a county government.

There is a Metropolitan Planning Council for the five county region that includes Chicago. However, this is a civic association, and not a political body.

Community councils? No

Neighbourhood Committees? No

Case Study Summary:

With a population of about 2,900,000, Chicago is similar in size to the new City of Toronto, which will have a population currently estimated at 2,400.000. In addition, Chicago has a weak mayor system in which the mayor must function as a consensus builder, a situation which also makes it more comparable to Toronto than New York and other U.S. "strong mayor" cities.

There is no comprehensive, general purpose community or neighbourhood committee structure in Chicago. However, it has a significant and strong community policing program, involving organized community participation through District Advisory Committees. Another significant community building effort is program to rebuild Chicago's public school system.

Evidently some consideration was given to the establishment of a formal network of district planning boards, based on the areas defined for community planning studies. However, this idea met with opposition from both the mayor and city council. The mayor in particular was concerned about the creation of an independent power base outside council because the city's weak mayor system necessitates extensive negotiation between the mayor and the members of council in order to get approval for specific initiatives.

Chicago does have a program, run out of the Mayor's office, to promote the creation of "Block Clubs,' which are voluntary neighbourhood associations. One rationale for encouraging these clubs to organize themselves is the role they can play in improving the quality of life in the City. For example, the Mayor's office has created a number of special programs, such as "Adopt-a-Street" and "Give Graffiti the Brush," in order to support the involvement of Block Clubs in improving the quality of life in Chicago's communities. The Block Clubs are also active in the community policing program.

In addition, the Mayor's office has regularly scheduled public meetings in each of the City's 50 wards and 25 police districts. These public forums, which include both general purpose information meetings and single-topic gatherings designed to address a specific issue, are attended by the mayor, his cabinet and other top departmental officials. Among other things, these community forums are intended to give residents within each ward an opportunity to voice their concerns directly to the officials responsible for administering city services.

In April, 1997, Mayor Daley announced a new neighbourhood revitalization program called Neighborhoods Alive. This program includes an additional $1 billion in neighbourhood infrastructure by the year 2000. Goals include the rebuilding of schools, improved school safety and learning; improving "the life of families" by making sure there are accessible parks and libraries serving Chicago neighbourhoods; increased housing; and community policing.

In general, Chicago has recognized the importance of strong neighbourhoods to a healthy city, and its mayor and councillors work with citizens, residents and block associations and community organizations to promote a better quality of life in the city. However, no formal, comprehensive neighbourhood governance system has been put in place.

"A-6": Los Angeles: Neighbourhood Difficulties and Proposed Responses

Population: 3,500,000

Background/Context:

Los Angeles, the central city for Los Angeles County, has a ward-based electoral system, with a weak mayor structure. There are 15 councillors for the entire city.

Community councils? No

Neighbourhood Committees? No, but a proposal is under discussion.

Case Study Summary:

In order to deal with a large number of social problems and a high degree of racial and ethnic diversity, Los Angeles has introduced several initiatives to enhance a sense of community and to support neighbourhood renewal. Among these are a Volunteer Bureau, established in 1993, at the suggestion of a task force on volunteerism and operating out of the Mayor's Office, and LANI, the Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative. LANI, which was launched by the Mayor's office in 1994, is intended to "re-focus public resources to help revitalize those neighborhoods most dependent on public transit."

One of the challenges faced by Los Angeles is the difficulty of ensuring effective political leadership, service delivery and citizen consultation with 15 councillors for 3.5 million people. In order to respond to requests, and to keep in touch with constituents' servicing needs and demands, the councillors have hired an increasing number of staff, with the result that, at present, each councillor, all of whom work full-time, has a staff of approximately 12-16 people.

In terms of community governance initiatives, a proposal is currently before the City's Governmental Efficiency Committee to establish a system of neighbourhood councils, based on neighbourhood governance and participation initiatives in other cities, including Portland, St. Paul, Birmingham, Dayton , San Antonio, Seattle and Salt Lake City. Many of these initiatives were described and assessed in **The Rebirth of Urban Democracy** (Berry, Portney, Thomson, 1993) which was a source for this study as well.

The motion described the initiative as follows:

> Starting in each of our existing 103 identified neighborhoods, community, business, school, religious and other leaders will come together and begin the process of further defining the boundaries of their neighborhoods, of forming their own councils, and of selecting their own leaders in whichever manner they choose. Each neighborhood council will adopt its own by-laws and procedures for selecting its representatives.

> The City will create a support system to assist the neighborhood councils in and staffing themselves.
>
> Each neighborhood council will organize open elections and provide free membership for anyone who lives, works, or owns property in the neighborhood; adopt a non-discrimination policy; develop a plan of goals and objectives, including a "bill of Responsibilities"; develop a neighborhood disaster preparedness plan which would be part of a citywide "Prepare LA" plan; ensure that the council truly represents the diverse interests of the neighborhood; train staff and community volunteers in conflict mediation skill; and communicate with all the people in the neighborhood on a regular basis.

A subsequent refinement of the proposal addresses the concern that 103 neighbourhood councils would likely be unmanageable as a network. The alternative proposal is to divide the city into 35 districts, based on existing neighbourhood boundaries, resulting in an average population of about 100,000 people per neighbourhood district. Population would not have to drive the establishment of the neighbourhoods, since the neighbourhood districts as contemplated are not intended to correspond to wards.

The motion was placed before the committee in the summer of 1996. Delay in acting on it is related to on-going discussion of the need to review and amend the City's Charter. There are two competing approaches, each involving a commission established in a different way, one supported by the mayor, and the other by the council. (The fact that Los Angeles has a weak mayor system means that the process of political negotiation is relatively time-consuming.)

Notwithstanding these organizational and political difficulties, there is general agreement that some form of neighbourhood governance is required. There is also an interest, in the context of charter reform, in adding at least two additional councillors, probably elected at large.

As described by the assistant to the councillor who put forward the original motion, there is a sense that responding to citizen demands and bureaucratic sluggishness by continually enlarging each councillor's staff has clearly reached a point of diminishing returns. The creation of neighborhood councils is seen, as set out in the motion, as a recognition that "government has, and probably always will have, an inadequate supply of resources to solve our problems."

A "Questions and Answers" Newsletter from the sponsoring councillor provides a useful summary of the issues faced in introducing a system of neighbourhood councils into a large North American city, including the burdens of process, the role of neighbourhood committees in relation to elected politicians, effectiveness of participatory institutions in low income neighbourhoods, potential balkanization of a large city, and the importance of dealing with crime.

Discussions of the proposal with citizens have also raised an important issue about the impact of giving citizens actual decision-making as opposed to advisory powers. Initially this was considered desirable by residents, but after consideration of the possibility of being held formally liable for decisions, the appropriateness of maintaining an advisory status was recognized. This issue is also important in terms of significant differences between representative and participatory democracy.

"A-7": New York's Community Boards

Population: 7,500,000

Background/Context:

New York City is one of the few true amalgamations in the U.S. Although the amalgamation took place in 1898, the city still recognizes the separate identities of its five constituent boroughs (Manhattan, Brooklyn, Staten Island, the Bronx and Queens), each of which has a directly elected borough president. Up until 1989, the Borough Presidents served on a City Board of Estimate. However, the Board of Estimate was eliminated in that year in response to a federal court opinion that it violated the one person/one vote U.S. constitutional doctrine.

At this point, the Borough presidents do not have any direct legislative authority, and specifically do not sit on City Council. They do, however, have public profile and certain key responsibilities, including the appointment of one member each to the City Planning Commission and to the Board of Education. They also appoint community board members, as described below, chair their respective borough boards and have a direct involvement in the land use planning and service delivery in their boroughs.

The New York City Council is comprised of the Mayor and 51 city councillors elected by ward.

Community councils? No

Neighbourhood Committees? Yes: 59 community boards, as mandated by the City Charter.

Case Study Summary:

New York's Community Board system was put in place as comprehensive form of neighbourhood governance with the adoption of New York's 1975 City Charter, which gave the community boards a formal role in decisions on land use, in the preparation of the city's capital and operating budgets and in the monitoring service delivery. These charter provisions were actually the culmination of earlier initiatives, including the establishment of 12 Community Planning Councils in the Borough of Manhattan in 1951. In 1963, amendments to the City Charter extended the concept to the other boroughs through the establishment of Community Planning Boards.

The broadening of the community boards' powers in 1975 represented a combination of the community planning boards with the decentralized service delivery experiment initiated by Mayor John Lindsay and known as "Little City Halls." Each decentralized service delivery office had a "District Manager" and a "service Cabinet," terms that are used today in the context of the community boards' role in service delivery.

Under the community board structure, New York City as a whole is divided into 59 community districts, each of which has a Community Board (CB). Boundaries of the community districts were defined in accordance with provisions of the 1975 City Charter which directed that each district should "(1) so far as feasible, lie within the boundaries of a single borough and coincide with historic, geographic and identifiable communities from which the city has developed; (2) be suitable for the efficient and effective delivery of services by municipal agencies to be made coterminous with the community districts...; and (3) be compact and contiguous and be within a population range of one hundred thousand to two hundred and fifty thousand persons." (Pecorella, 1994, pp. 129-130)

Each CB has up to 50 members who serve on a volunteer basis, in staggered terms of two years each. The 50 members are appointed by the borough president, but at least half of these must be from a list of nominees submitted by the councillor(s) who represents the community district or any portion of it. (There are 51 council districts, or wards, as opposed to the 59 community districts.) All of the CB members must either reside or have a business, professional or other interest in the community district, and not more than 25% can be City employees.

The City Charter states that "the borough president shall assure adequate representation from the different geographic sections and neighborhoods within the community district," and "shall consider whether the aggregate of appointments fairly represents all segments of the community."

Each CB has a paid district manager and staff. In addition to managing the CB's office, the district manager is chair of the District Service Cabinet, which plans and coordinates the delivery of city services within the CB district.

The main responsibility of the District office is to receive and resolve complaints from community residents, although many CB offices have assumed a responsibility for providing additional services, such as assisting with senior citizen rental forms and housing assistance applications. They also process permits for block parties and street fairs, and may also handle special projects, including organizing tenants and business associations, coordinating neighbourhood cleanups, publicizing special events, and a range of other services, depending on the needs and interests of different communities.

The CBs deal with a wide variety of community issues, and are to "co-operate with, consult, assist and advise any public officer, agency, local administrators of agencies, legislative body or the borough president with respect to any matter relating to the welfare of the district and its residents." At their discretion, they can hold public or private hearings or investigations with respect to any matter relating to the welfare of the district and its residents, but can only take action at meetings that are open to the public.

The CBs meet once a month, except during July and August. Each Board establishes sub-committees to deal with particular issues, and these generally meet once a month as well. The CBs deal with any issue of concern for the communities they represent, but have formal, mandated responsibilities with respect capital and operating budgets, planning issues and service delivery.

In terms of budgets, for example, the schedule of budget submissions calls for each CB to prepare

- a District Needs Statement, which describes long range local issues and the CB's proposed strategies for addressing them (due by August);
- capital budget submissions, including up to 40 requests for specific projects, with priorities (due by November 1);
- operating budget submissions, including up to 25 requests for programs of personnel, with priorities (due by November 1); and
- service program priorities, which rank 80 local programs provided by the city (due by November 1).

As the city moves through its budget cycle, the CBs have opportunities to comment on the city's proposals in light of CB priorities.

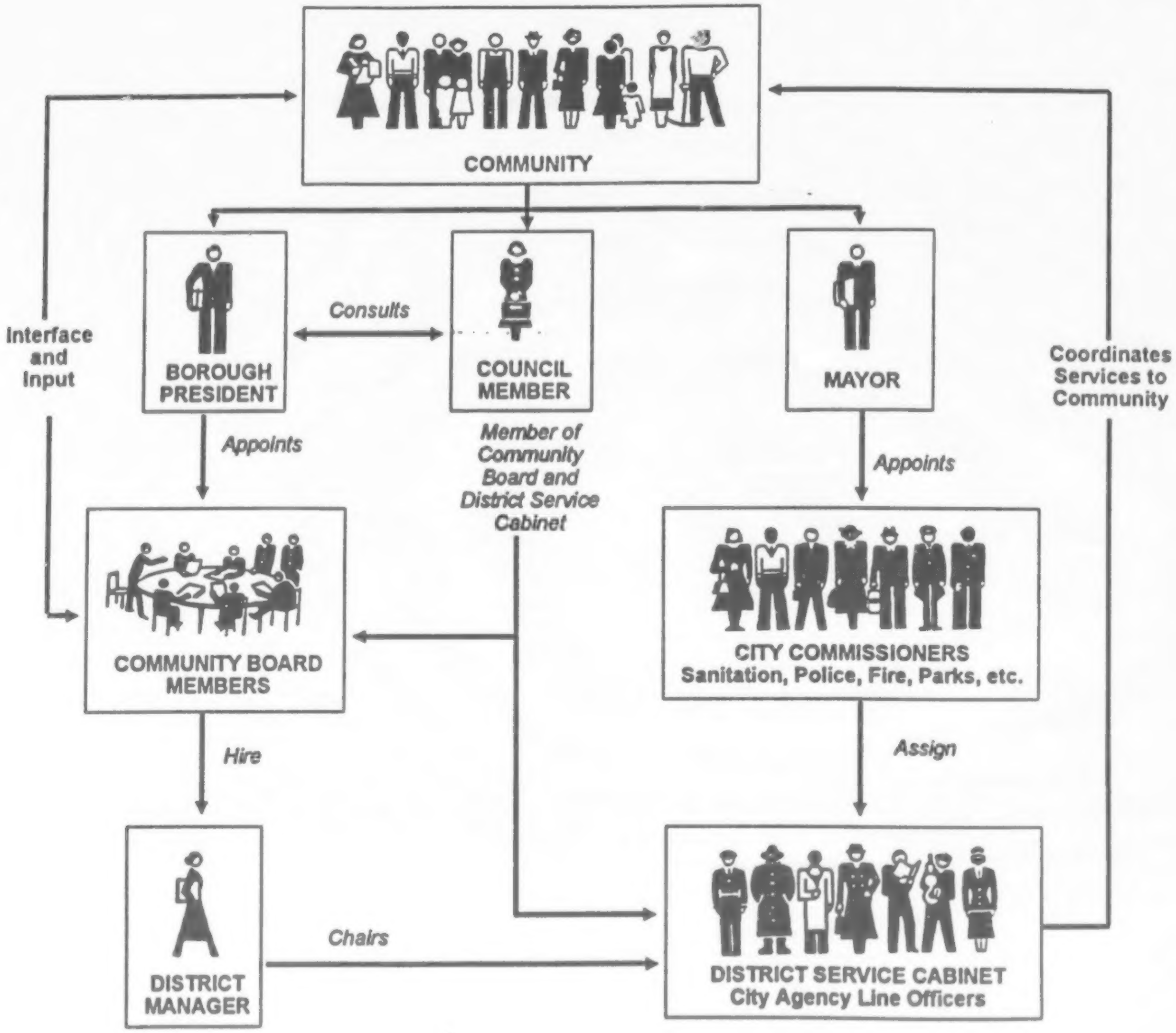
The CBs also have a mandated role in the uniform land use review procedure (ULURP). In general, CBs must be consulted on land use issues within the community district, including the location of public facilities. They may also initiate their own plans, and any application for a variance or rezoning must come before the CB so that its position can be considered in deciding how applications and proposals are to be dealt with. Negotiations frequently take place between proponents and the CB, in order to address local concerns.

In addition to their formal responsibilities, CBs also provide a forum for the resolution of community disputes and the management of conflict within the communities, including those which arise in the context of cultural and racial diversity.

A key point to be noted in terms of the new City of Toronto is the fact that community board districts were initially established on the basis of service delivery areas, and do not correspond to ward boundaries. The emphasis on achieving the coterminality of community boards with service districts rather than political districts means that the community board districts are "offset" from political boundaries. This approach to neighbourhood committees may be of interest in Toronto, which will have an opportunity to consider the organization of staff and new approaches to service delivery as well as issues of political representation.

The following figures, which are taken from the 1996 **Handbook for Community Board Members**, illustrate how the community boards fit into New York's city government structure.

CITY GOVERNMENT IN THE COMMUNITY


COMMUNITY
Interface and Input
BOROUGH PRESIDENT
Consults
COUNCIL MEMBER
MAYOR
Coordinates Services to Community
Appoints
Member of Community Board and District Service Cabinet
Appoints
COMMUNITY BOARD MEMBERS
CITY COMMISSIONERS
Sanitation, Police, Fire, Parks, etc.
Hire
Assign
DISTRICT MANAGER
Chairs
DISTRICT SERVICE CABINET
City Agency Line Officers

COMMUNITY BOARD

Each Community Board has up to 50 nonsalaried members appointed by the Borough President. One-half of the appointees are nominees of the City Council Member who is also a Board Member without a vote. Appointed Board Members serve for staggered terms of two years.

DISTRICT MANAGER

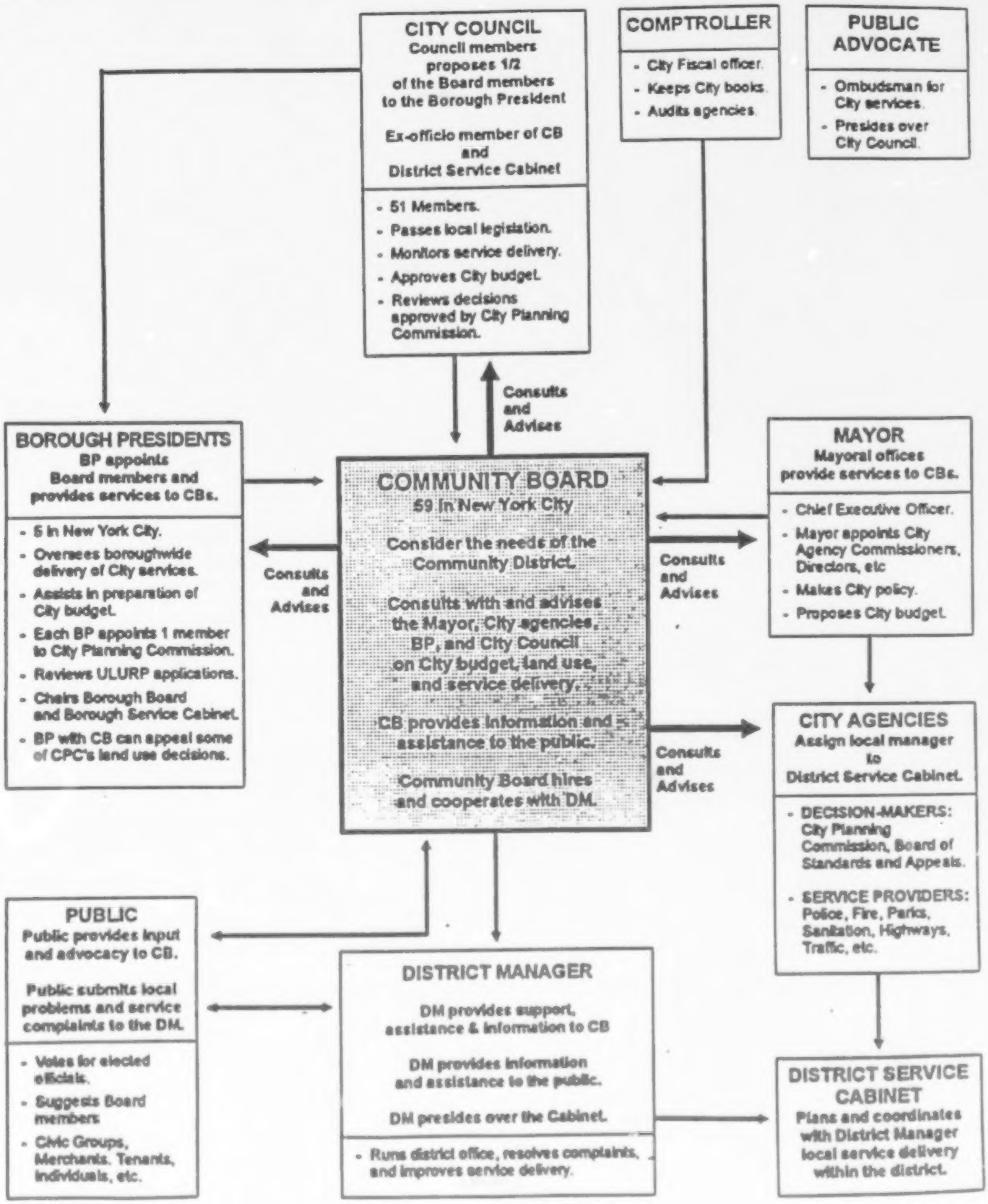
The District Manager heads the Community Board's office and serves at the pleasure of the Board. The District Manager fulfils many different functions, such as municipal manager, community organizer, advocate, information source, and chair of the District Service Cabinet.

DISTRICT SERVICE CABINET

The District Service Cabinet plans and coordinates the delivery of City services within the Community District. Cabinet membership includes a representative from Charter-mandated City agencies, Community Board Chairperson, and Council Member of the District.

Community Assistance Unit, Office of the Mayor

HOW COMUNITY BOARDS RELATE TO THE CITY



CITY COUNCIL
Council members proposes 1/2 of the Board members to the Borough President

Ex-officio member of CB and District Service Cabinet

- 51 Members.
- Passes local legislation.
- Monitors service delivery.
- Approves City budget.
- Reviews decisions approved by City Planning Commission.

COMPTROLLER

- City Fiscal officer.
- Keeps City books.
- Audits agencies.

PUBLIC ADVOCATE

- Ombudsman for City services.
- Presides over City Council.

BOROUGH PRESIDENTS
BP appoints Board members and provides services to CBs.

- 5 in New York City.
- Oversees boroughwide delivery of City services.
- Assists in preparation of City budget.
- Each BP appoints 1 member to City Planning Commission.
- Reviews ULURP applications.
- Chairs Borough Board and Borough Service Cabinet.
- BP with CB can appeal some of CPC's land use decisions.

COMMUNITY BOARD
59 in New York City

Consider the needs of the Community District.

Consults with and advises the Mayor, City agencies, BP, and City Council on City budget, land use, and service delivery.

CB provides information and assistance to the public.

Community Board hires and cooperates with DM.

MAYOR
Mayoral offices provide services to CBs.

- Chief Executive Officer.
- Mayor appoints City Agency Commissioners, Directors, etc
- Makes City policy.
- Proposes City budget.

CITY AGENCIES
Assign local manager to District Service Cabinet.

- DECISION-MAKERS: City Planning Commission, Board of Standards and Appeals.
- SERVICE PROVIDERS: Police, Fire, Parks, Sanitation, Highways, Traffic, etc.

PUBLIC
Public provides input and advocacy to CB.

Public submits local problems and service complaints to the DM.

- Votes for elected officials.
- Suggests Board members.
- Civic Groups, Merchants, Tenants, Individuals, etc.

DISTRICT MANAGER
DM provides support, assistance & information to CB

DM provides information and assistance to the public.

DM presides over the Cabinet.

- Runs district office, resolves complaints, and improves service delivery.

DISTRICT SERVICE CABINET
Plans and coordinates with District Manager local service delivery within the district.

"A-8": Portland's Recognized Neighbourhood Associations and District Coalitions

Population: 503,000

Background/Context:

The City of Portland is located in Multnomah County, but the city and county governments have distinctly separate as well as some shared responsibilities.

Multnomah County, together with Clackmas and Washington Counties, comprise Metro, the only regional government in the U.S. with directly elected representatives. The Metro structure was established to ensure coordination and partnering among local jurisdictions regarding overall issues of strategic importance, including transportation, land use, solid waste management and regional facilities. For example, Metro is responsible for the regional Urban Growth Boundary. The Metro area has a population of about 1.6 million.

The City of Portland itself is organized on the basis of a councillor-commissioner system. A mayor and four councillors are elected at large, and each councillor, including the Mayor, is responsible for the operation of a specific department(s).

The City of Portland's **Office of Neighbourhood Associations** (ONA) is a city bureau (department), reporting to a Commissioner/Councillor and funded by municipal tax dollars. In 1974 it was designated as the vehicle for communication between City Hall and the citizens of Portland. The ONA is responsible for promoting citizen participation and communication among all city neighborhoods, and operates the following specific programs:

- Neighbourhood and Citizen Involvement
- City-wide Crime Prevention Coordination
- City Information and Referral
- Refugee and Immigrant Coordination
- Neighbourhood Mediation Center
- Community Outreach and Citizen Training
- Outreach Coordination for the Downspout Disconnect

Community councils? No

Neighbourhood Committees? Yes:

By meeting minimum standards set out in the city ordinance for the ONA and following guidelines established by the ONA, neighbourhood associations can be officially recognized by the City of Portland. Any neighbourhood association meeting the minimum standards and complying with the ONA guidelines is entitled to and may request assistance from the ONA.

In addition, Portland supports its citizen, their activities and neighbourhood associations by funding District Coalition Offices. Each office provides direct support and services to the neighbourhood associations within the boundaries of its district. There are seven districts, six of which are represented by a District Coalition Board. (The seventh has a neighbourhood office but no formal District Coalition Board.) Each office is staffed with a co-ordinator, a crime prevention specialist and other support staff to assist citizens with information and access to resources.

A District Coalition Board is defined in the ONA ordinance as "the geographically defined neighbourhood-based contracting agent with the City which serves as an information resource for citizens and a provider of citizen participation and crime prevention serves. It is primarily composed of persons selected by member neighbourhood associations and such other persons as are provided for in the board's by-laws."

Case Study Summary:

Portland's Office of Neighbourhood Associations was established in 1974, as an initiative strongly supported by the then mayor, with the objective of providing a strong voice for neighbourhoods in all aspects of city government. The initiative followed, and in a sense was a reaction to, federal programs initiated in the 1960's. These programs--the Model Cities and Community Development Block Grant programs in particular--came with mandate for citizen participation, but only for the portions of the city in which they applied.

The objective behind the founding of the ONA was to build a strong citizen participation system which was neighbourhood-based, but city-wide, and which provided for strong citizen involvement in all aspects of city government. In pursuing this objective, Portland has in effect built a culture of citizen involvement which influences the practices and procedures of its politicians, professional staff and community organizations.

In creating the ONA and the culture of citizen involvement on which it is based, Portland decided to build on existing residents associations, which had been active in the city since the 1930's, but to create a structure and support system for these associations which ensure that not only middle class homeowners in certain parts of the city were represented.

Portland's grass-roots approach can be distinguished from quasi-governmental participation systems such as the community board structures in New York and Christchurch, among other places, as well as from the sub-municipal district councils established in Amsterdam.

Creating a system based on existing associations with a long history of independence from City Hall took time. Existing associations resisted participation in the structures put in place by the ONA, and it wasn't until 1987 that sufficient consensus was achieved to permit the enactment of amendments to the ordinance which established the ONA in order to put in place the structure that now exists. This structure relies on the following distinction between Neighbourhood Associations and Recognized Neighbourhood Associations:

> Neighborhood Association: A group of people organized for the purpose of considering and acting upon any of a broad range of issues affecting the livability and quality of their neighborhood. A neighborhood association may be "recognized" by the City. A recognized neighbourhood association is one which meets the minimum standards of this chapter and applicable guidelines adopted by the Office of Neighbourhood Associations.

The current ONA Guidelines date from 1992, and include basic requirements for becoming a Recognized Neighbourhood Association; provisions setting out the roles and responsibilities of District Coalitions, the ONA and District Coalition staff; provisions for determining Neighborhood Association and District Coalition Boundaries; grievance procedures; Neighbourhood and District Coalition newsletter policies; and procedures for seeking amendments to the Guidelines.

Key requirements for recognition include: membership that is open to any one who lives within the association's boundaries, plus other individuals or organizations as set out in each association's bylaws; clearly stated boundaries which do not overlap another associations boundaries, except where there is written agreement; non-discrimination; dues on a voluntary basis only; and the filing and maintenance with the ONA of bylaws, which must include, among other things, grievance procedures and meeting requirements.

Portland features prominently in **The Rebirth of Urban Democracy** (Berry, Portney and Thomson, 1993), which identifies the following critical ingredients for success:

- a strong motivation to make citizen participation work on the part of citizen groups, political vision and a history of strong public participation mandates related to federal programs;
- a participation system based on small natural neighbourhoods, citywide application; and systems to ensure a strong flow of information to citizens and associations;
- a shared commitment to a balanced perspective on all issues and a determination to move beyond NIMBYism, and to resist any incursion of party politics; and
- the development of a strong support from all segments of the city, and a buying into the system by community leaders from a wide range of constituencies.

In terms of critiques, Berry et al note occasions of hostility among neighbourhoods and between neighbourhoods and City Hall. They note that the existence of multiple opportunities for participation--i.e., not just through Neighbourhood Associations and District Coalitions--may account for some uncertainty about who speaks for neighbourhood interests. The existence of multiple access points for citizens has had a beneficial effect on policy-making.

The system in Portland is quite similar to the structure for citizen participation in Seattle, which is also supported by a city department--the Department of Neighbourhoods, which, like the ONA, has helped to build a culture of participation and co-operation, and provides support services to neighbourhood associations through thirteen District

Councils. St. Paul also has a similar system of District Councils for organizing neighbourhood associations.

The following chart sets out the organization of Portland's system.

"A-9": Amsterdam's District Councils

Population: 800,000

Background/Context:

Sub-national government in the Netherlands consists of two levels--12 provinces (provinces) and the municipalities (gemeenten). The existence of urban regions is also recognized, but these are not considered to be levels of government.

The City of Amsterdam is located in an urban region, the Regionaal Orgaan Amsterdam, or ROA, which has a population of about 1,300,000, and is part of the Province of North Holland. The Amsterdam City Council is comprised of 45 aldermen (councillors), plus a burgomaster (mayor), who, like all Dutch mayors, is appointed by the reigning monarch.

The council members are elected on the basis of a system of proportional representation. Each party prepares a list of candidates, and councillors are selected from these lists on the basis of the proportion of the vote received by the party. As a result, every administration is essentially a coalition of political parties.

A college, or inner council, corresponding to an executive committee, is responsible for the day-to-day running of the city. The college is comprised of seven of aldermen, each with a separate portfolio, and the mayor.

Beginning in 1982, Amsterdam instituted a radical program of decentralization which was intended to result in the complete devolution of the city government to 16 smaller autonomous municipalities. In addition, on the regional level, there was a separate intent to dissolve the larger City of Amsterdam and transform the ROA into a new urban province, within which would contain the 16 new municipalities, plus the suburban municipalities inside the ROA but outside the limits of the City of Amsterdam prior to its dissolution.

Over the period from 1982 to 1994, the 16 sub-municipal districts were created and many functions devolved to them. However, in recent years resistance to the creation of the new urban province began to emerge both within the suburban municipalities and the province of North Holland. This resistance was joined by growing opposition to the dissolution of the City of Amsterdam as a municipal government.

A Referendum was held in 1994, which resulted in an overwhelming vote against the dissolution of Amsterdam and the creation of the urban region. As a result, the 45 member Amsterdam Council remains as the municipal structure within which are contained the sub-municipal district councils. These district councils are considered municipalities for purposes of the Dutch Municipal Act. Most of their budget, however, is provided from the national state, via the Amsterdam Council. There is no property tax.

Community councils? No

Neighbourhood Committees? Yes, but in the form of a neighbourhood-based, sub-municipal tier of local government.

Case Study Summary:

The move to political decentralization in the early 1980's followed efforts to decentralize the Amsterdam civil service through a system of area management. However, the area-management approach did not prove a satisfactory solution to the general perception that Amsterdam was both too big and too small for efficient service delivery. There was also some pressure for increased political decentralization on the part of neighbourhood advisory councils established in the 1960's. The objective of the decentralization exercise was increased citizen involvement in municipal government, and the creation of a more efficient and effective system for delivering local services.

As noted above, the initial intention was ultimately to devolve all power from the Amsterdam city council to district councils representing populations of between 20,000 to 80,000. The 16 districts were created around the central core, which continued to be the responsibility of the "old" city council.

However, as also noted, the proposal to eliminate the municipal government, once all 16 district councils were in place, was ultimately opposed, and the district councils have not become autonomous, as originally intended. Instead, the districts have become an integral part of a larger municipal structure, and their decisions are to some extent still subject to approval by the city council.

Each District Council has its own city hall or municipal building, and employs its own district staff. (All districts have the same collective agreement, so transfers from one district to another are not difficult.)

Together the 16 district councils have added slightly more than 380 locally elected district councillors to the total number of local politicians in Amsterdam. Each district council is responsible for community matters, including local planning, housing, streets, sanitation, education, recreation and social/cultural facilities within its boundaries. The main city council retains authority over more strategic matter, including police and healthcare, and provides a sense of identity for the City of Amsterdam in a larger, historically significant fashion.

Dutch sub-national governments are financed primarily by two funds--the gemeenten (municipal) fund and the provinces (provincial) fund, both of which draw on tax revenue collected at the national level. The gemeenten fund and additional grants from the national government provide from 85-90% of Amsterdam's revenue, which is largely distributed to the district councils, who supplement it with some minor local user fees and other taxes. There is no property tax.

At this point, there seems to be general agreement that the district councils and the decentralized delivery of services has resulted in improved efficiencies and related savings. There is also a general consensus that the quality of local services has improved and the level of satisfaction on the part of citizens is higher. However, there is also a realization that the districts are too small in terms of the capital requirements of service delivery. For example, it is not reasonable or efficient for each district to invest in its own garbage trucks and fire fighting equipment. This issue is being addressed through the inter-district service agreements.

Another issue raised by the decentralization initiative is the question of whether district councils should be responsible for regional amenities, landmarks and facilities, such as Amsterdam's famous concert hall, its largest urban park and its social housing developments. At this point, the decision has been to assign responsibility for these facilities to the district councils.

In summary, if the complete devolution of local government in Amsterdam had taken place as originally intended, the district councils could not reasonably be considered a form of neighbourhood committee. We have decided to classify them as such because, like Paris' arrondissement councils, they primarily function as means of increasing accessibility, participation and neighbourhood representation. The district councillors are not full-time politicians, but are essentially community leaders who have accepted the responsibility of helping to govern their neighbourhoods. They have not replaced the main Amsterdam Council or its college of aldermen and mayor.

One concern with the system of submunicipal councils is the significant increase in the number of elected representatives. In particular, the relatively small sizes of the districts and the fact that the position of district councillor is not paid as a full-time job have resulted in some difficulties in filling all of the positions with satisfactory candidates.

"A-10": Christchurch's Community Boards

Population: 308,000

Background/Context:

A thorough-going reform of New Zealand's local government system was part of a restructuring/reinvention of government at all levels undertaken by the Labour party when it came into power in 1984. A Local Government Commission was established, but met opposition, including court challenges, particularly over municipal boundary revisions. When the Labour government was re-elected in 1987, it strengthened streamlined LGC procedures in order to make them much less vulnerable to court challenges.

By 1989, a comprehensive reorganization of local government had been put in place. Among other things, 828 different local political units (cities, districts, boroughs, etc.) had been reduced to 86 territorial districts.

Part of the local government reinvention effort has been a concentrated emphasis on cost-effectiveness, competitive tendering and accountability to the public. In this regard, a clear distinction is made between the responsibilities for operations and decision-making (i.e., "steering and rowing"), such that administration and day-to-day operations are the responsibility of a chief executive (city manager), without the intervention of the mayor and council members. For example, the city manager is the only employee of the city council. All other employees are employed solely by the city manager.

Under the Local Government Act of 1974, territorial governments are permitted to elect community boards, which are voluntary citizens' advisory bodies. This provision was maintained, with some minor amendments, following the comprehensive reorganization of 1989.

The Christchurch city council is one of 73 territorial local governments, 14 of which are cities/towns and 59 of which are districts. As a result of the 1989 reforms, its amalgamated boundaries include the original city of Christchurch, and all or part of four other former local territorial governments.

Christchurch is divided into 12 electoral districts, or wards, each of which elects two councillors and three community board members. The wards are paired to create six community boards, to which the council also appoints three councillors.

Christchurch is on of 11 territorial local governments located within the Canterbury Region. With a population of 450,000, Canterbury is the largest of New Zealand's 13 regions. There is a regional council, whose its main role is the promotion of sustainable management of natural and physical resources primarily under the Natural Resources Act.

Community councils? No

Neighbourhood Committees? Yes: 6 Community Boards.

Case Study Summary:

Under New Zealand's 1974 Local Government Act, community boards have the following general terms of reference:

(a) The consideration of and reporting on of all matters referred to it by the territorial authority or any matter of interest or concern to the community boars;
(b) The overview of road works, water supply, sewerage, stormwater drainage, parks, recreational facilities, community activities, and traffic management with the community;
(c) The preparation of an annual submission to the budgetary process of the territorial authority for expenditure within the community;
(d) Communication with community organizations and special interest groups within the community;
(e) To perform such functions as are delegated to it under the authority of section 101zz of the Act.

Section 101zz provides that the community boards are to perform the functions and duties and exercise the powers delegated to it by a territorial authority (in the case of Christchurch, a city council), but also sets out those duties and powers which cannot be delegated to a community board.

Among the duties and powers which may not be delegated to a community board are:
- powers conferred on the territorial authority by the Public Works and Resource Management Acts;
- the power to borrow money, levy property taxes (rates) or other charges;
- the power to enact bylaws;
- the power to acquire, hold or dispose of property; and
- the power to appoint, suspend or remove staff.

The permitted and prohibited powers and duties set out in the Local Government Act are general in nature, and in practice community board functions are more varied than the act might suggest. The following are the Terms of Reference for Christchurch's community boards:

1. All matters requiring elected member consideration referred directly to it unless there is a clear metropolitan reason for not doing so.
2. A continuing involvement in the functional areas of streetworks, local traffic engineering, refuse collection, elderly persons' housing, local parks, community activities, recreation activities and monitoring of regulatory activities.
3. The right to act as a resource consents hearings panel.
4. A policy and monitoring overview of local aspects of streetworks, parks, traffic, engineering, community activities and regulatory functions.

5. The right to approve by way of recommendation an annual submission to the central budget process, and to determine matters relative to the discretionary local budget lump sum approved by the Council.
6. The right and duty of active liaison with residents/business/special interest groups in the community, with the particular objective of expanding the existing residents' groups programme.
7. An ongoing obligation to keep the Council informed as to community aspirations and level of satisfaction with the service provided.
8. Advice to Standing Committees on local implications of all metropolitan projects which have particular impacts in the community in question.
9. Advice to Standing Committees on local implications of such metropolitan projects which have city-wide impacts as are referred to Community Boards for comment.

Community Boards also have specific approval powers within their respective areas and subject to reports on these matters to the Council, for the erection of garages, retaining walls, parking platforms and structures related to vehicular access; the placement of regulatory street and parking signage; and the installation of parking meters, parking islands, roundabouts; traffic constraints and pedestrian crossings on local roads.

In general, Christchurch's community board system would appear to have somewhat more delegated powers and to be more closely integrated into the local council New York's community boards, which, as noted, represent areas which do not correspond to wards, and do not have councillors as full members.

Christchurch community boards receive administrative support through six suburban service centres, and each has a community manager to provide advice and assistance. Board members receive a small stipend for their services.

One of the key responsibilities of community boards is to liaise with local residents groups and other community organizations.

There have evidently been tensions between community boards, professional staff and elected councillors, the later particularly when board members and councillors are from different political parties. The success of community boards seems to correspond to their ability to perform meaningful role--i.e., where they are delegated meaningful duties and powers, and are able to carry them out, they are considered a successful part of the local government structure.

In addition to the community board system described above, Christchurch also encourages and supports the establishment and development of residents groups to represent their areas,

and to become involved in the community, social and political issues which affect their neighbourhoods. The Council provides some specific technical support services to residents groups, and makes use of the system of residents groups to keep Christchurch residents better informed and more widely consulted.

Assistance to residents groups and other community organizations is one of the key responsibilities of the Council's Leisure and Community Services Unit.

"A-11": Paris' Arrondissement Councils

Population: 2,150,000

Background/Context:

France has a highly centralized system of government, which has been termed a "fused" or dual system in order to indicate the extent to which the national state is involved in local affairs, and local officials are involved in the affairs of the national state.

As a result of this dual system, there is at the local level both a deconcentrated component of the national state, the department, and an "organic" form of local government, the commune. The department is essentially a field office for the central government, and also has supervisory powers over the communes within its boundaries. The key official within the department is the prefect, who is the representative of the central government at the local level.

Countering this centralization is a high level of involvement in national affairs by local leaders. For example, many French ministers retain the mayoralty of their local authority. As two examples, Gaston Deferre in the 1980's was both mayor of Marseilles and Minister of the Interior, and Jacques Chirac became Prime Minister while holding the office of Mayor of Paris. These dual roles mean that decisions taken at the national level are informed by an understanding of their local significance.

Within France there are approximately 36,500 communes, ranging in size from small hamlets or villages of less than 500 people to large cities such as Marseilles and Paris. The majority of France's communes have populations of less than 2,000. Attempts to force amalgamations of communes for the sake of greater administrative efficiency have consistently been resisted, and generally emphasis is placed on promoting co-operative arrangements among communes, rather than merging them.

The city of Paris, the Ville-de-Paris, is both a commune and a department, and its council votes on both a commune and a department budget, as well as a police budget. The council has 163 members, and the mayor is elected by the council from among their ranks.

The population of the city of Paris has spread out into eight departments, the outer boundaries of which define the Ile-de-France regional planning district. The Ile-de-France includes some 1, 279 communes, many of them rural villages in the outer portions of the region, and has a population of about 10,000,000. It acquired its own elected council in 1986, in accordance with legislation enacted in 1982 as part of a major decentralization effort.

Except in the largest cities, an arrondissement is essentially an intermediate territorial division of a department, and contains within it several communes. However, in Paris, Lyon and Marseilles, arrondissements are sub-municipal districts.

As M. C. Hunt and J. A. Chandler note, "the conventional concepts employed to analyze British local government are not immediately applicable to an understanding of the French system." (Chandler, ed., 1993, p.55)

Because local government in North America has been influenced by British traditions, it is also difficult to fit French local government into a North American framework. However, notwithstanding these structural differences, France, like North American, British and other European countries, has had to address the challenge of reconciling regional urbanization and with the need to respect local identities and interests. It has done so in a way that addresses both a highly centralized form of government, and a deep attachment to the historic unit of local government, the commune.

Beginning in 1982, France has undergone a major decentralization of all its government structures, involving a transfer of power from the central state to local and regional councils, significant reductions in the power of prefects and decentralization within large municipalities.

One component of this decentralization effort, the 1982 Law on Administrative Organization in Paris, Marseilles and Lyon and Public Bodies for Intercommunal Co-operation, was brought into force in the face of strong opposition, including that of Jacques Chirac, Mayor of Paris. This 1982 law established elected sub-municipal (arrondissement) councils in Paris, Lyon and Marseilles.

Community councils? No

Neighbourhood Committees? Arrondissement Councils, as described below.

Case Study Summary:[2]

There are 20 arrondissements in Paris, with an average population of 100,000. Under the 1982 Law on Administrative Organization in Paris, Marseilles and Lyon and Public Bodies for Intercommunal Co-operation, each arrondissement council has 20 members, two thirds of which are elected by proportional representation using the same procedures established for communes with populations over 3,500.[3] The remaining third are representatives elected to the municipal (communal) council from within the arrondissement. The arrondissement council elects a mayor and two deputies from within its membership. The mayor and at least one deputy must be municipal councillors.

---

[2] The description of arrondissement councils is based largely on Norton (1993) and Bush (1991).

[3] Alan Norton (1993) describes this system as follows: "In communes of over 3, 500 inhabitants councillors are elected by list in two rounds by proportional representation and without panachage. If in the first round any list wins an absolute majority it wins half the seats (rounded upwards if necessary.). These are allocated to the top half of the list of candidates. The remaining seats are distributed between all lists which received at least five per cent of the vote, including that which has already won half the seats...If there is no list with an absolute majority, any list winning at least five per cent of the vote may be submitted for a second round. The surviving lists may be amalgamated to strengthen their appeal to voters. In the second round half the seats are given to the list which wins most votes and the remainder are distributed between the other lists in accordance with the rule of the highest average. Candidates are taken from the top of the lists in downward sequence until all seats allocated to each list have been filled. In the event of a tie between lists, age determines who shall win the seat.

Each arrondissement council has an "initiatives and consultation committee" representing local and national associations active in the area, and is required by law to give this committee all the information it needs for its work.

Responsibilities of arrondissement councils generally fall into three categories: public relations activities, including promotion of the benefits of living and working in the area; the articulation of local concerns; and the provision of an entry point for business with the city council.

The arrondissement councils are consulted by the municipal council on local planning matters, grants and other assistance to associations within the arrondissement, and the conditions of admission to creches, kindergartens, homes for the elderly, etc. They may also be delegated responsibility for providing certain services for residents, such as sports facilities, allocation of social housing, and local activities of interest to its inhabitants.

Arrondissement councils are essentially advisory, and may intervene on matters of interest or concern in writing to the mayor or verbally to the municipal council. Their budgets are part of the larger municipal budget, with the amount allocated to the arrondissement being determined through negotiation with the city council, on a per capita basis. Support staff, numbering up to 76, are employees of the city of Paris.

Arrondissement mayors have responsibilities related to promotion, elections, planning and municipal properties within the area. They are also responsible for commune business and for carrying out their council's decisions. They chair and serve as executives of the local schools' finance committee. The arrondissement mayors also meet on a regular basis with the mayor of Paris.

"A-12": The : Overview of Related Issues

A-12.1 Reasons for Looking at Recent Experience in the UK:

As the result of significant changes in the structure of local government in Great Britain during the past 25-30 years, many of the issues which have been brought into focus by the municipal restructuring in Ontario have been identified, written about and debated by academics, theorists, politicians and activists in a British context.

The appropriate size and structure of local government, the relative merits of one and two-tier structures, the tension between the individual as consumer and the individual as citizen, the meaning of community, the role of local government as the enabler rather than the provider of services, contracting out, and the creation of quasi-government service boards--these are all issues which have received extensive attention in the UK. Moreover, the interest in these issues is not simply theoretical, but is related to real and dramatic changes in the structure and practices of local government which affect both the concept and experience of citizenship and community.

Another link between local government reorganization in Britain and in Ontario is the extent to which restructuring processes in both places have been affected by differences between highly urbanized and more rural contexts. Although attempts were made through local government commissions in Britain in both the 1970's and the 1990's to take a consistent approach to all municipalities, these differences have ultimately affected central government decisions about the appropriate form of government at the local level.

As a final point regarding links between Ontario and the UK, it is worth noting, though perhaps trite to say, that Ontario municipal government has been influenced by traditions and practices from England, as well as from the U.S.

Notwithstanding these similarities, the fact of a unitary national state and the role played by party politics at the local level in Great Britain have influenced the relationship between the national state and local government in ways that have no direct parallel in Ontario. Similarly, issues raised for Britain by the existence of the European Community and the Single European Market, institutions which have had an impact on local and regional governments in Europe, have no comparable parallel in Ontario

In addition, as noted by Harold Wolman (in Judge, Wolman, Stoker, 1995) local service delivery is generally seen as the primary rationale for British local government, and debates regarding municipal structure usually focus on the extent to which a particular arrangement will facilitate efficient and equitable provision of services at the local level.

In summary, there are important similarities and differences between local government reform in Britain and in Ontario. The primary differences, which are related to the role of party polities, the fact of a unitary centralized national state and a focus on service delivery at the local level, mean that individual municipal case studies from Britain do not easily provide practical lessons for Ontario municipalities.

On the other hand, the issues raised and objectives involved in efforts by Britain's central government to reorganize local municipalities in a comprehensive fashion suggest that the British experience should not be ignored when considering local government reform in Ontario, including the possible roles of community councils and neighbourhood committees.

A-12.2 Significant Events in UK Local Government Reform:

In his 1994 ***International Handbook of Local and Regional Government***, Alan Norton notes that the period from the 1890's to the 1930's is generally considered the "golden age" of British local government. During this time, local governments provided a growing number of public services, including hospitals, public education, youth employment, labour bureaux, low-income housing, poor relief and town and country planning, together with a range of other functions. In addition, private acts allowed local governments to develop and control public transportation, water, gas and electricity, docks and other utilities and services.

However, after the 1930's, and particularly in and following the post-war period, many of these services and functions were moved from the local to the national level and the role of local government as an all-purpose service provider began to diminish, and its role as an administrative unit of a centralized welfare state began to increase.

Notwithstanding these changes, the **structures** of British local government remained essentially unchanged from 1888, when universal elected local government was established through the creation of the County Council system, until the 1960's. The absence of structural reform during a period of changing responsibilities and rapid urbanization resulted in a fairly confusing system of local governance. As described by Whitehead (1994), the pre-1960's structures consisted of "a huge number of authorities of wildly varying sizes, with a lattice-work of overlapping responsibilities...arising in part because of the accretory nature of the systems."

As one response to these concerns, in 1963, the London County Council government was reformed through the establishment of the Greater London Council. The GLC was essentially an upper, metropolitan tier of municipal government, encompassing a lower tier made up of local councils for the City of London and the 32 London Boroughs.

Redcliffe-Maud Commission and the Local Government Act of 1972

In 1966, following a Labour victory in 1964, the Redcliffe-Maud Commission was set up with the mandate of modernizing local government in England outside of London. A parallel commission was established for Scotland, known as the Wheatley Commission. A newly created Welsh Office undertook to do its own review in Wales.

Redcliff-Maud recommended the wholesale scrapping of English counties, to be replaced by 58 identically functioning unitary local authorities ranging in size from about 200,000 to just over 1,000,000, all of which were to be capable of providing the entire range of services previously distributed among different tiers of government.

In addition, Redcliffe-Maud recommended the establishment of metropolitan governments (similar to that already in place in London) in Manchester, Birmingham and Merseyside. Finally, Redcliffe-Maud recommended 8 regional councils (Provincial Councils) under which the Unitary Authorities and the two-tier Metropolitan Authorities were to be grouped.

In brief, Redcliffe-Maud essentially recommended that, except for metropolitan areas, Britain should move to a comprehensively applied single tier system of local government, under a new regional tier of eight Provincial Councils.

The Wheatley Commission also recommended a smaller number of much larger local authorities within a two-tier system. The Scottish reorganization, which took place in 1974-75, involved the amalgamation of 33 county councils into 9 regional and 3 island councils. The City of Glasgow, for example, was included in the Region of Strathclyde, which had a population of over 2,300,000. The Welsh Office also recommended a two-tier system with enlarged counties and districts.

The findings of Redcliffe-Maud were for the most part accepted by the Labour government, but before legislation could be adopted the government fell, to be replaced by the Conservatives under Edward Heath, and the recommendations of Redcliffe-Maud were changed prior to implementation. Legislation enacted by the Conservatives (the 1972 Local Government Act) did **not** include the eight provincial councils, but instead kept the existing Rural (Shire) Counties. The recommendations for Scotland and Wales were accepted essentially as proposed by the Wheatley Commission and the Welsh Office.

For England, as the result of government changes to Redcliffe-Maud, the 1972 Local Government Act not only confirmed the two tier structure of the GLC, but also applied this system comprehensively across all of England, including both urban and rural areas. The results included, in addition to the GLC, six Metropolitan Counties, under which were 34 Urban Districts; and 38 Shire Counties, under which were 278 Rural Districts, with a third but discretionary tier of Parish Councils.

Alan Norton (1993) describes the impact of the 1972 Local Government Act, which came into force in 1974, as follows:

> Around 1,300 district and borough authorities in England and Wales and 59 county councils vanished into history on 31 March 1974, to be replaced by 369 districts and 53 counties: a reduction by two-thirds. Taken in crude averages this meant that the average-size authority was increased from about 36,200 population to 107,500, almost tripling in size. In Scotland a year later 430 local authorities were replaced by 68, changing the average population size from about 11,860 to 75,000.

There were problems with the 1972 two-tier system from the outset, including the arbitrary geographical sizes of the new Districts, many of which were simply large stretches of countryside and groups of communities with no common identity or desire to co-operate with each other. Another source of instability was the lack of clarity regarding the distribution of responsibilities between County and District levels of government. However, with the exception of Margaret Thatcher's decision to simply abolish the Greater London Council and the six Metropolitan Counties in 1986, the two-tier system remained essentially unchanged into the 1990's.

The 1980's saw the growth of two trends in thinking about local government. The first was a increasing interest in decentralization, spearheaded by the (lower tier) District Councils. In 1986 the Association of District Councils released a document entitled *Closer to the People*, which set out the case for reform based on a pattern of unitary, all-purpose councils and the abolition of the upper tier County Councils.

In developing its position and accompanying arguments for further local government reform, the ADC marshalled evidence from other European countries, particularly Scandinavian governments, that unitary authorities as small as 25,000 people could administer services that in Britain were assumed to require much larger units of local government. According to the ADC document "the aim should now be to create local authorities, whatever their size, which can serve as a natural focus for local concern about public issues which vitally affect them."

The second, more dramatic development in Britain in the 1980's was the momentum of the "Thatcherite project" to transform local governments into enabling bodies which would no longer provide services themselves but instead prepare contracts, determine the extent and quality of service and regulate and monitor the operation of contracts once these had been let, a policy direction which has increasingly received broad acceptance world-wide through the "Re-inventing Government" movement.

In keeping with this emphasis on small government, privatization and contracting out, certain regional functions of the GLC and the six metropolitan counties were replaced with ad-hoc authorities set up by the central government to deal with police, fire, civil defense and public transport. These quasi-autonomous bodies, or "quangos", can be created and abolished by the central government with little or no attention to local opinions.

Two initiatives of this period--Compulsory Competitive Tendering and the development of Citizen's Charters--an initiative of John Major, who replaced Thatcher as Prime Minister in 1990--signaled a concerted effort on the part of the British government to re-focus local governments and public agencies on serving the needs of their "customers" as efficiently as possible, and at the lowest cost.

1992 Local Government Commission

The unfinished and unstable nature of the 1970's reforms, the need to replace the extremely unpopular Poll Tax, and the tensions resulting from the promotion of local government as enabler led to another round of local government review and structural reform following the fall of Margaret Thatcher in 1990.

The process of redrawing the local government map began in 1991 with the publication of a White Paper on the structure of local government. The 1991 White Paper suggested that a unitary system was probably the best approach for a comprehensive reorganization of local government and that a Local Government Commission should be established to make recommendations for reforms based on this idea. Because changes had already been made in London and the other six urban metropolitan counties, where all upper tier governments were simply abolished, the LGC was essentially directed at Shire (Rural) England.

Three commissions were actually initiated as the result of the 1991 White Paper: the Local Government Commission for England, chaired initially by Sir John Banham and hence known as *the Banham Commission*, and parallel studies for Wales and Scotland undertaken by the Welsh and Scottish Offices. The Welsh and Scottish commissions were essentially administrative operations which imposed a one-tier system on Wales and Scotland in 1994. The Local Government Review for England was originally scheduled for completion in 1997, but was speeded up by the government and issued its recommendations in 1995.

The initial guidance from the government to the LGC for England had been to move to a single-tier system, based on (lower tier) districts rather than (upper tier) counties, which were to be eliminated. In the end, however, the Commission's recommendations were much more mixed. Of the 39 shire areas (counties) reviewed, unitary authorities were introduced in 21, with no changes to the two-tier structure in the remaining 18. As noted in the Commission's 1995 report *Reviewing Local Government in the English Shires*, "on the basis of its evaluation of the identities and interests of local communities, and the requirements of effective and convenient local government, the Commission was not satisfied that changes were desirable in those (18) areas."

A-12.3 Neighbourhood Committees: Parish Councils as a Form of Neighbourhood Committee Within a Structure of Larger Local Governments:

As noted by J.A. Chandler (1996), Britain has been much more willing to radically change the structure of its local governments than has any other western European country. Chandler also observes that "Britain may be able to claim a long standing world record for the population size of the effective lower tier of elected local government. " In this regard, the average population of Britain's metropolitan and non-metropolitan District governments is 139,300. the next largest is the average Swedish municipality, with an average population of 29,200.

As the result of restructurings, local government responsibilities have been shifted to larger territorial units, and municipal governments have grown in terms of the population represented. As these changes have occurred, Britain's original, "organic" local government--the rural parish--initially fell into decline. (In this respect, Britain differs from Europe, where the commune, the local government unit which corresponds to the British parish, continues as the basic unit of formal local government and has resisted amalgamation or other forms of consolidation.)

However, British Parish Councils have not disappeared, and today there are over 8,000 in England, and 800 in Wales, where they are known as Community Councils. In addition, up to 1,343 Community Councils are permitted in Scotland, although not this many have been formed. Parish Councils are not mandatory, but they may take on some responsibilities of a local authority, provided these are to them. Parish Councils can levy local rates, and they can call for referenda.

Parish Councils vary in size from populations of less than 100 to over 40,000. Some are run entirely on a voluntary basis, and some have budgets and staff. Primary Authorities--County, District and Unitary Councils--are encouraged to consult with Parish Councils, but are not required to by legislation.

Although Parish Councils are traditionally a rural institution, there have been efforts, some successful, to introduce similar community-based structures into urban areas. For example, following Scotland's division into large Regional Governments in 1972 , as recommended by the Wheatley Commission, Community Councils were introduced in Glasgow as a means of achieving decentralized political and administrative functions.

In **The Politics of Decentralisation**, Burns, Hambleton and Hoggett (1994) make the following observations:

> There has been a long-standing campaign to widen the use of neighbourhood councils in cities (Young, 1970). In the mid-1980's Birmingham City Council mounted an ambitious programme to introduce ninety-four formally constituted local parish councils into the city, but the council was unable to persuade the Boundary Commission of the merits of its case. A strength of the urban parish (or community) council is that it is elected by local people. Parish councils are, of course, active in many rural areas (Elcock, 1982, pp. 357), but their potential in the urban context has yet to be explored.

One indication of the continued importance of these small discretionary units of community government is the fact that not only the Local Government Acts of 1972 and 1992 but also the Local Government and Ratings Bill, expected to be enacted in the spring of 1997, contain specific provisions relating to parishes and parish councils, which are generally understood as having two main roles: community representation and local administration. However, they are not formal governments, and have no required duties to perform.

Notwithstanding their informal status, these small councils are considered a suitable forum for the identification of community issues and a reasonable means for facilitating community participation and local consultation.

The November 1996 "Draft Guidance on Consultations with Parish and Town Councils" states that the Primary Authorities are expected to enter into voluntary consultation agreements with Parish and Town Councils, where these exist. The Draft Guidance indicates the following matters should normally be included in such voluntary agreements:

- Local Planning Matters including applications for listed building consent; establishment of conservation areas; applications to fell, lop or top trees protected by tree preservation orders. (Principal authorities are already required to consult local councils on some planning matters.)
- Local Highway Issues such as proposals for parking restrictions; carrying out works to or in a highway; road safety; street naming; street lighting.
- Public Rights of Way including proposed public path creation, diversion or extinguishment orders.
- Recreation & Leisure Facilities; parks and amenity areas; libraries.
- Local Authority supported bus services and bus shelters.
- Local Education Matters such as proposals for the opening and closure of schools or other educational facilities.

- Housing Strategies.
- Environmental Issues including prior approval of construction works; public entertainment licensing; making litter control areas & street litter and control notices; dog ban bylaws; dogs on leads bylaws/designations and designation of Poop Scoop area; proposals for recycling, composting and recovery of energy from waste schemes; local air quality management.

In terms of their role in expressing local community identity and interests, an accompanying November, 1996 "Draft Circular on Parish Review" includes the following comments on how to define a parish:

> The boundaries between parishes should reflect the "no-man's land" between communities represented by areas of low population or barriers such as rivers, road or railways. They should be, and should be likely to remain, easily identifiable. They must fall within one district council area and should not generally cross district ward or county divisional boundaries. However, administrative convenience is not the only, and is sometimes not the most important, consideration. Parish arrangements should be built up from the individual community and regarded only incidentally as administrative sub-sets of the district council.

Because of their non-mandatory nature, their role in the expression of community identity and their value as a means of promoting local citizen participation in municipal decision-making, Parish Councils can be seen as a form of Neighbourhood Committee, as defined in this study. The fact that there is increased interest in their role in the overall scheme of local governance suggests that voluntary, citizen-led neighbourhood structures are increasingly seen as a valuable and useful partner with local governments, which have generally become larger and less numerous.

A-12.4 Community Councils: Radical Decentralization in Tower Hamlets:

One of the findings of this study has been that Community Councils, defined as area-based committees of council comprised of groupings of elected politicians representing contiguous wards, are generally not found outside of Canada. The only exceptions identified were in Britain.

The most widely recognized British example of decentralization of a local council into community councils is the London Boroughs of Tower Hamlets, where area-based committees of ward councillors were introduced by a Liberal municipal council in 1986. The "Decentralisation Progress Report" attached to a 1987 Occasional Paper of the University of Bristol School for Advanced Urban Studies (**Decentralisation and Democracy** edited by Hoggett and Hambleon) provides the following information on the Tower Hamlets experiment:

"Party in control:	Liberals
Date of initial proposal:	1986
Population:	144,600

Number of decentralised areas proposed:	Seven
Average population of decentralised area:	20,000
Services to be decentralised:	Most of housing, community services, 'field' social services, technical services (with the exception of transport, waste disposal and building control). Financial and strategic control will mostly remain central.
Form of devolved control:	Seven neighbourhoods based on existing ward boundaries, with neighborhood committees composed of ward councillors controlling all decentralised services in their area."

As reported by Bush (1991) and discussed more fully by Burns, Hambelton and Hoggett (1994), the Tower Hamlets experiment resulted in a number of fairly severe problems. In Bush's words--writing in 1991-- "so much power has been decentralized that the capacity to ensure equality of resource allocation has been undermined."

In addition, four of the seven neighbourhoods in the decentralized Tower Hamlets were controlled by Labour, notwithstanding that the elected primary council was Liberal. As a result, partisan interests have prevented the principle of neighbourhood autonomy from being applied equally. As Burns, Hambelton and Hoggett point out, the decentralization in both boroughs has increased the cost of government.

Confirmed British proponents of decentralization, such as Burns, Hambleton and Hoggett, acknowledge the difficulties of pursuing the kind of radical decentralization exemplified by Tower Hamlets, but remain convinced that radical decentralization is an indispensable component of a reinvigorated local democracy.

A-12.5 Conclusions:

The UK local government reforms of the 1960's and 1970's, which generally included the introduction of a two tier system and the creation of larger government units in urban regions, have been replaced by a greater emphasis on single tier governments. Generally speaking, the larger metropolitan/urban region structures associated with reforms of the 1960's and 1970's have been broken down into single tier units.

However, notwithstanding the government's stated desire in 1992 to move to a comprehensive, uniform unitary system, the more recent Local Government Review commenced in 1992 has led to a local government system which includes a mix of one- and two-tier structures. In the context of the on-going restructuring of local governments in Ontario, it is useful to take into account the extent to which local, cultural and historical considerations have influenced the outcome of an exercise initially intended to produce a uniform and consistent approach to local government structure.

It might also be useful for regional governments and/or less urbanized municipalities to consider the approach to Parish (Community) Councils being taken in the UK. As voluntary local governments, they have no mandatory administrative responsibilities, but are used as mechanisms for the expression of community identity and community consultation by primary authorities, and may be delegated responsibilities by these authorities.

In terms of the specific example of community councils in Tower Hamlets, it was severe social and economic problems that led to this experiment in radical decentralization. However, there seems to be a general consensus that extreme neighbourhood decentralization alone was insufficient to address these deep problems. It is not clear that the experience of Tower Hamlets, which informed the Radical Decentralization Model of Community Councils presented in this report, is transferable in a thorough-going way to an Ontario context.

APPENDIX "B": LIST OF PEOPLE CONSULTED

APPENDIX "B"

LIST OF PEOPLE CONSULTED

The following people were consulted by telephone, e-mail or in person during the course of preparing this study.

Anstey, Wayne: Director, Administrative and Legal Services, Halifax Regional Municipality, Nova Scotia
Beason, Marie: Executive Director, Neighborhood Resource Centre, City of Indianapolis, Indiana
Brownstone, Meyer: Professor Emeritus, Political Science Department, University of Toronto
Browton, Dorothy: City Clerk, City of Winnipeg, Manitoba
Butman, Laurel: Community activist and spokesperson, Portland, Oregon
Cameron, John: Special Outside Counsel to Department of Housing and Municipal Affairs, Province of Nova Scotia
Cobourne, Ed.: Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services, Boston, Massachusetts
Consuela, Maria: City Clerk, Vancouver, B.C.
Crook, Brent: Director, Neighborhood Service Centers, Department of Neighborhoods, City of Seattle, Washington
Darke, Roy: Chair of City Centre Resident Advisory Group and former Director of Planning, Winnipeg, Manitoba
Dhar, Satish: Senior Policy Advisor, Local Government Policy Branch, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Province of Ontario
Dickstein, Shelley: Co-ordinator for Volunteers, Neighborhood Leadership Office, City of Dayton, Ohio
Diers, Jim: Director, Department of Neighborhoods, City of Seattle, Washington
Duncan, Bruce: General Manager, Planning and Development, City of Edmonton, Alberta
Evers, Judy: Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services, Boston, Massachusetts
Eadie, Jae: Deputy Mayor, Winnipeg, Manitoba
Erwin, John: Staff Director, City Council, City of Boston, Massachusetts
Frisken, Frances: Professor, Department of Urban Studies, York University
Granger, Don: Co-Chair, Hamilton-Wentworth Constituent Assembly, Mohawk College
Gurin, David, Commissioner of Planning, Metro Toronto
Hammer, Bob: Grants Manager, City of St. Paul, Minnesota
Hengereld, Frans: Director, Social Affairs, City of Rotterdam, the Netherlands
Heywood, Phil: Brisbane, Australia
Heywood-Speils, Mary-Lou: Manager, Office of Neighbourhood Co-ordination, Albuquerque, NM
Joyce, Adrian: Chair, Queens Community Board No. 7, Queens, New York
Keating, Michael: Professor of Political Science, University of Western Ontario
Knoll, Chris: Community Planning Division, Planning Department, City of Winnipeg, Alberta
Lemon, James: Professor, Department of Geography, University of Toronto
Leo, Christopher: Department of Political Science, University of Winnipeg, Winnipeg, Manitoba
Linn, Diane: Executive Director, Office of Neighbourhood Associations, Portland, Oregon
Linner, Bob: City Manager, City of Regina, Saskatchewan

Lips, David: Mayor's Office, Indianapolis, Indiana
Maxwell, Ian: Manager of City Marketing, City of Christchurch, New Zealand
Nelson, Greg: Assistant to Councillor Joel Wachs, Los Angeles City Council
Neufeld, Bernice: Executive Director, Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, Edmonton, Alberta
O'Grady, Cathleen: Solicitor, Department of Housing and Municipal Affairs, Province of Nova Scotia
Phillips, Stephen: Community Manager, Linwood Service Centre, Christchurch City Council, Christchurch, New Zealand
Roweis, Shoukry: Professor of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Toronto
Ruppert, Evelyn: Facilitator, Hamilton-Wentworth Constituent Assembly
Selinger, Greg: Winnipeg Education Centre, former City Councillor (1989-1992), City of Winnipeg, Manitoba
Shute, Sandra: City Clerk's Department, Halifax Regional Municipality, Nova Scotia
Smith, Mary Anne: Alderman, 48th Ward, City of Chicago, Illinois
Stevenson, Don: Canadian Urban Institute
Swenson, Jack: Assistant Commissioner of Community Development, (Chicago)
Taub, Les: Community Board Services Co-ordinator, Community Assistance Unit, Mayor's Office, City of New York, New York
Tunnacliffe, Nicholas: Commissioner of Planning, Ottawa-Carleton, Ontario
Van der Laan, Peter: Director, Program Services Division, Corporate Services, City of Toronto, Ontario
Weinstein, Naomi: Mayor's Office, San Francisco, California
Wilson, Maureen: Regional Environmental Department, Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth, Ontario

APPENDIX "C": NOTES FROM ROUNDTABLE MEETINGS

APPENDIX "C"

NOTES FROM ROUNDTABLE MEETINGS

SUMMARY NOTES FROM FOCUS GROUPS MARCH 26 - APRIL 15, 1997

The following summary includes questions and comments raised by participants with responses from focus group leaders (and in the case of Toronto and Hamilton, guests from New York and Portland). The text is based directly on transcripts of recordings of the events, and the intention is to provide a sense of the issues and concerns addressed by participants.

St. Lawrence Hall, TORONTO, March 26, 1997

- A question was raised regarding how to ensure the breadth and quality of representation of all residents in a neighbourhood given that Metro is at least 35% non-English mother tongue, 52% tenant, and 33% single family home dwellers.
    - In response, guests from New York indicated that in order to obtain equal representation, members/volunteers are appointed, not elected. However, this is very difficult to ensure.

- Another question was raised about how community boards deal with larger urban, public policy issues (i.e. city-wide).
    - Mr. Joyce's response was that we try to get people involved from many different organizations and boards.

- What is the process by which people are selected to serve on committees?
    - In New York, Board members are appointed by council from applications.
    - In Boston, of 21 neighbourhood council representatives, seven are elected at-large, seven by precinct and 7 are selected by the first fourteen from applications from community organizations.

- Issues and concerns were raised by one participant about the organization of committees/ councils:
    - Province should select ratepayer groups - some groups should stay intact.
    - Ratepayer groups should be formally bounded geographically.
    - There should be an executive board and it should be run according to a rule of order by the province.
    - Agendas for ratepayer groups should be set by council.
    - The Metro level of government is not working well - local city halls should stay intact and local councilors should sit at local city hall once a week, once a month and still meet as they do now so that local identity is not lost - these people would sit with Mega council with reports passed out to local council and down to ratepayer meetings - this way the system stays intact and community representation is not lost.
    - Ratepayers should be paid an honorarium or per diem to garner interest in participating. (Mr. Joyce and Ms. Butman did not agree about paid positions as volunteers should not be on a salary.).

  - Agendas need to go weekly or monthly at the neighbourhood level so that local councilors know what the neighbourhoods were talking about a month ago and this information is also handed over to Mega council.

- A question was raised regarding whether or not the Ontario Government needs to legislate neighbourhood councils or whether they should let them evolve from the political or neighbourhood level.
  - In response, if it is not legislated then it may not happen and even if it does the process may take too long. The key issue really is not whether it is legislated or not, but rather if it is an appropriate level of citizen input that is important.

- Adrian Joyce was asked how community boards are staffed and relationships between the Borough president and local councilors. What happens when the president and councilors conflict?
  - Community boards are staffed by city employees as stated in their Charter.
  - The borough president is not a member of the city council, but head of the Borough. The president does not sit on community boards, but does appoint people to them. The president is elected and responsible for the augmentation of services for the borough.
  - In general, when there is an issue that is controversial, city councilors will try to follow the borough president's lead. In some situations, however, the process is reversed and council takes the lead position.

- Clarification was needed about whether the community council's function is largely related to land-use planning issues.
  - In New York, the Charter requires the community boards to deal with land use issues, but they also deal with a variety of other issues such as crime prevention and budgets.

- A concern was raised about whether these organizations could be used as a "gatekeeper" to limit access to politicians. Are politicians accessed through these organizations or can politicians be accessed directly? In response, anyone can be heard by city council or staff; neighbourhood associations are not the only means to accessing politicians. The advantage with associations is that one will have a greater voice and can help contact the most appropriate person.

- A participant made the following comments:
  - Perhaps the councils will allow for a more unified face for Metro or GTA.
  - The current cities do not think about the big picture, i.e. the fact that the GTA is one economic unit. It is the neighbourhoods that make the city work.
  - However, getting rid of the six cities may lose some of the diversity that Toronto has - too much central planning reduces diversity in terms of our political representation.
  - What we need to do is think small instead of big, but how do you coordinate the small?

Another participant pointed out that people are fearing a loss of input or empowerment which is a part of community and grassroots activity. There is not enough trust between the people proposing it and the people concerned about it. Community involvement and empowerment is more important than just the land-use issues.

- A lot of clarification was needed on the usage of the definitions of community councils and neighbourhood committees. There was also a sense of confusion about how these definitions relate to the participants.

- Participants wanted the representative from New York to identify instances where community boards are not working and why? His response was not geographically specific, however he cited time involvement of volunteers as more than many can bear. This creates unequal representation in associations and unpredictability of volunteer turnouts. Their mechanism to solve this is that they try to network throughout the community to involve those that do not have the time. Portland has a formal grievance process people can follow if they feel they are not properly represented. There is a removal process that can remove a coalition board member.

- Question for Portland activist: Your 4 councilors and Mayor are elected at large. Is there a turn-over from election to election? How do at-large councilors represent you and what happens if two councilors from the same area of the city are in conflict?

- Concern directed to Portland activist regarding the small number of political representatives relative to Hamilton which is similar in size, but which possesses a significantly larger number of representatives.

- Question directed to Ms. Pendergrast regarding research conducted on mechanisms to ensure fair representation for each neighbourhood association at the council level. "What protective safeguards would be in place so a fair shape could be given to small neighbourhood associations for the voting system? How would voting be set up? Would there be one vote for every association?" Ms. Pendergrast indicated that the research project was at this point only descriptive of what other cities were doing.

- A debate arose over the pros and cons of having elected representatives versus appointed members of community councils. Examples were raised from Boston, and Charleston and Portland's system of representation was described.

- Three concerns directed to Portland activist regarding funding:
  - Aside from the distribution of grants from council, what other sources of revenue do committees have?
  - What proportion of revenues come from grants, what strings are attached and how are these monies distributed?
  - Do they have the ability to tax themselves?

- Questions directed to both Portland and New York representatives regarding the role and responsibilities of elected officials to the community councils and neighbourhood committees.
  - Clarify the role and responsibilities of the politician in your structures
  - What responsibility do elected representatives and bureaucrats have to provide you with information? Are you in a position where information is provided to you. Therefore are you able to work from a more collaborative pro-active point of view?

Will politicians give you up-to-date information as situations evolve as opposed to informing you about decisions already made?
  - In response, Mr. Joyce stated that politicians have a very good working relationship with the boards and most often, people are informed early in the process.

- It was noted that neighbourhood associations are advisory in capacity; they do not make decisions for council. Associations may have influence, but they are participatory and not representative.

- There was discussion regarding whether existing mechanisms for neighbourhood associations are working adequately or if they need improvement?
  - In terms of Hamilton, New York and Portland's systems are a solutions in search of a problem. "They have just got completely out of control and they are now struggling to develop neighbourhood councils to give: a) some input from what the people want, b) some means of spreading the responsibility around for what they are going to do anyway."
  - One participant did not feel the Hamilton's political process works well. The executive council for neighbourhood committees worked hard, but there was a lack of continuity and predictability/stability in membership. The idea of having 4 alderman and one mayor was attractive to the group.
  - One participant likened the idea to that of downloading responsibility. Volunteers at the neighbourhood level do not get paid and do not have the time. Therefore, a formal, unpaid structure would not work.

- There was discussion about the problems with setting up neighbourhood organizations and keeping, creating and maintaining a sense of continuity and cohesiveness in the community. Neighbourhood associations should be oriented toward the common good of the region.

- A debate arose over citizen empowerment. Some participants felt that by increasing a citizen's influence, one would be able to achieve the results that people in that neighbourhood really want to see achieved. Others felt that shifting more responsibility to the citizens (or volunteers in this situation) would be an unfair burden or time commitment.

- Key issue: Issue-driven neighbourhood associations.
  - Interest wanes when there are no conflicts.
  - How to keep neighbourhood associations active so that when issues arise it is easy to mobilize volunteers?
  - What then will these new models do for the common person to keep them interested and the group active?
  - Associations need to have reliable support (i.e., a neighbourhood office – where people could go to a centrally located neighbourhood office, get information that is constantly being updated by the city about local issues) and a form of funding.
  - The Hamilton executive committee failed because it was issue-driven.

- Participants at several instances in the workshop brought up the issue that neighbourhood groups often have a "darker side" that is exclusionary. The question that was raised is how might neighbourhood committees be able to ensure equity and access for all in a neighbourhood regardless of race, culture, age, etc.?
    - Participants mentioned that a broader representation is sometimes achieved with appointed councils.
    - One participant's example of the way his association includes the large Chinese population in his neighbourhood - they once dedicated half of their newsletter's front page to the issue of home invasions in Chinese script. As well, they conducted a door-to-door campaign and the presentation was made in Greek, Chinese, Jewish, Indian. The message is that you have to reach out, and be creative to get people involved.

- One participant is concerned that neighbourhood committees are just a way to devolve responsibility downward
    - "We're terrified that everything is just a cheap way of getting the city to run for free and it won't work because we'll just be completely turned off and we'll just walk away from the problems and that's the issue" This participant suggested that the "dark side" of neighbourhood associations is that the participants get something out of participating and as soon as that is lost, they will no longer participate.

- A comment was made that the community council proposal has only been brought forth to placate people for their loss of control over their neighbourhoods. The participant gave the example that varying service levels across the six municipalities would be brought down to some lowest common denominator and control over very local issues will be gone. This participant desires "something more representative than a committee which is appointed on high by the politicians"

- Participants wanted to know if community councils, (in the models from the research) are usually accompanied by neighbourhood committees, do they exist apart and what is the synergy between the two? Participants also wanted to know if neighbourhood committees are a more "indigenous" sort of group than community councils who are more formally structured. To this end, they wanted to know that if committees and councils are so close, would it be better to not have the two operating at the same time.

- There was much discussion at this meeting surrounding the make-up and funding of community councils and neighbourhood committees
    - Are they to be made up of volunteers or are they to be paid?
    - What will the process be for how and who would be appointed or elected to neighbourhood committees? Are the appointments to be part of the formal municipal election process?
    - A participant suggested a hybrid model where community councils are made up of 60% association presidents and 30% politicians. The role of the politicians in this model would be that of a "manager" - the "real feedback, the real voice of the communities come from the presidents of the associations"
    - How do you fund these organizations? It is the dues you collect that allow you to support the activities of the association.

- Some participants wanted to know how a community council would address the problem of getting areas in the community involved that have historically had trouble organizing neighbourhood committees.
    - Attracting people to committees is difficult - maybe 10 homes out of 1,000. Further, it is even more difficult to keep them interested - "it's like an apprenticeship to learn the issues. You have to go through the ropes and it takes years"

- A long discussion took place surrounding the issue of how the community councils would deal with the Mega council.
    - One question raised was how does a volunteer organization deal with a confrontational issue before a 57 member council if, for example, only three of the councilors are elected in their area?
    - One participant didn't see a difference between the status quo at their ratepayer's association and the definition of a community council except that a council is formally appointed to give certain kinds of advice or assistance.
    - Participants agreed that a key point is that support for local organizations depends entirely on the goodwill of the municipal government. Often, this informal goodwill is dependent upon municipal staff's knowledge of the local area.
    - One participant was concerned that with a community council and any restructuring that an individual would have to go through multiple layers to get to their councilor. As it stands now, small groups are focused on particular issues and councilors are familiar with their groups. The concern is that this familiarity will be lost as well as an individual's direct access to their councilor.
    - Someone spoke of their neighbourhood group being very ad hoc and they would not like to be *forced* to deal with budgets or policing issues. The ad hoc relationship they have with their politicians is beneficial and this informal relationship is going to be lost at the Mega city level.
    - Another thought that one of the key issues is how will a councilor know what your particular association is interested in unless they read an agenda which the participant thought would be too large for individuals to handle under an amalgamated city. As well, the councilors will not have the rapport with neighbourhood associations that exists presently.
    - One participant wanted resources to help get their neighbourhood's message out and for the need to be able to "access the levers of power"

- Broad discussion on the rewards and satisfaction of volunteers spending long hours on a committee.
    - In terms of planning and development issues, their reward is often a neighbourhood plan that reduces future work and confrontation because they have a level playing field and they can avoid the OMB.

- One participant thought that geographically defining boundaries of neighbourhood committees would be a mistake. "Let them occur and spring up as the need requires and through time they will mature, or disintegrate or get bigger or get smaller, but these are reflections of the issues of the day at the community grass roots level."

- Participants needed some clarification about the definitions of community councils and neighbourhood committees.

- There was concern/frustration that a discussion about community councils is moot since the government has already made its mind up.
    - In response, although these issues may be set in the new city of Toronto, many other amalgamations have been proposed across Ontario. This discussion may influence how other amalgamations evolve.
    - It was also noted that Bill 103 has a clause in it which says that new council can change (abolish or alter) community councils.

- There was concern that under the new system existing ratepayer associations would lose their status which the members worked hard to create.

- Several of the participants felt that their groups are working quite well.
    - In fact, an umbrella group has been formed to look after larger city-wide issues (opposed to very local issues) and contains 7 ratepayer groups.

- A participant noted that we should be careful when using examples from other cities as models for our own. There are many differences such as ethnic diversity, and city structure.

- Clarification was needed on the New York Model:
    - Are the people in the community boards dealing with the delivery of services, are they elected people, and are they paid? What is the time commitment like and how regular are the board meetings?
        - In response board members are appointed by the borough president (who is elected). The president is given a list from city council. It is time-consuming, but board members have paid staff to help reduce the volunteers work load. There is also very good communication between city council and community boards.

- In reference to the three models for neighbourhood committees, a participant questioned how well they worked, and how do politicians and residents view them? The participant also questioned the Winnipeg model.
    - In response: the Winnipeg example did not work very well, because there was a lack of support.
    - In order to make these models work volunteers need to feel that they have a return for their efforts–they need to feel efficient and that they had an influence on the final decision.
    - Volunteers must be committed and receive support and respect from the politicians and staff.

- There is a concern that once the city of Toronto is amalgamated that it will be difficult for individuals to be heard by the final decision makers since it is through the local councilor that we are heard in the existing system.

  - Citing the New York model, in response, community boards have a great deal of influence over what councilors do since the boards represent such a large number of voters.

- A comment was made that ratepayers are coming from a confrontational mind set, not a co-operative one. Often staff and councilors who do not represent your ward do not pay close attention to your needs; therefore one needs to be confrontational. In the new system, how do you get people to pay attention?

- A challenge was issued by a participant on how much discussion has been raised on checks and balances between citizens, bureaucrats, and politicians in this current process. If there has not been much then there needs to be.
  - In response: it is too early in the process to identify the checks and balances.

- What sort of influence do neighbourhood committees have on budgets?
  - A ratepayer thought that they should have some influence about how the money gets spent in their neighbourhood.
  - In the New York model, community boards have established priorities in terms of capital expenditures and property issues.

- There was a reaction to the purpose of community councils and neighbourhood committees as outlined by CUI: Often communication between citizens, staff, and politicians is not two-way. Citizens do not feel that their input has been listened or even considered.
  - Although opportunities have been set-up for input from citizens, citizens feel that their comments have not been considered due to a lack of feedback from consultation processes.
  - There needs to be a feeling that the citizens have had an influence in the process otherwise "what's the use"?

- A question was raised regarding how to do you get people involved and how do you get people to come out to regular meetings? And how do you avoid burning out the people you do chose to get involved if you can not get others to take their place?
  - In response: There needs to be a reduction in the cost of participation, in terms of the ease in which information from staff is received.
  - The participation process must have integrity and be transparent and involve two-way communication.

- The participant noted that he would not mind being involved so long as he felt that his opinions were being listened to and had some power to accomplish something.

- There is concern that with the new proposed legislation the government will tell existing organizations how they should be run, and make them operate with larger more formalized structures.
  - In response: CUI's research does not indicate that more formalized structures "eliminate the need for or the value of smaller groups that may organize themselves on a block basis or for a particular issue."

- What kinds of responsibilities should community councils and neighbourhood committees have?

    - Planning, local recreation issues customized to local needs, community safety (i.e., creating a sense of security in the community by the visibility of patrols and doing things that give a feeling of security), budgeting, service level reviews, and traffic and parking.

- A question was raised about who is liable for decisions that volunteers make on these community councils? Are there any American examples?
    - It was suggested that further research needs to be undertaken in this area.
    - No cases have been encountered about a community board ever being taken to court because they are advisory and do not have legal mandates.

- Throughout the workshop, participants discussed the amount of influence that community councils may have:
    - Do community councils formulate policy, assuming decisions are ratified by city council and would they be issue driven, (i.e., service delivery) or policy-related?
    - Do community councils have more weight than existing advisory committees?
    - Describe the relationship between politicians, staff, community councils, and neighbourhood committees?
    - What are the similarities between councils and committees?
    - Is there a potential for overlap of responsibilities between city and community councils?

- There was a discussion about the issue of funding and resources for community councils.
    - One participant questioned how community councils were funded and how the money was allocated?
    - Another person wanted to know if, in the communities that were studied, funding was allocated on a population basis to be administered by community councils or was is distributed by geographic boundaries?
    - Were there any examples of where the decisions to spend funding was delegated completely to community councils?
    - When community councils are instituted in an amalgamated municipality, is funding of jurisdictions, (which won't change in Toronto) adjusted?
    - One participant wondered that if community councils get funding and staff, then another level of government would be created.
    - Local community associations should be able to raise their own funds, and therefore not be tied to council's decisions.
    - Some participants felt that would be inequitable because some groups cannot raise the same amount of money as other groups. "There has to be some kind of central control of distribution and resources to ensure the neighbourhoods that cannot do certain things do have the resources to deal with their needs".
    - One person thought that there needs to be some kind of central control over the distribution of resources to ensure that poorer neighbourhoods are dealt with equitably.
    - One participant felt that community councils should be funded so that they can be effective and prepared when they go to the OMB.

- One person wondered if there were any cases where neighbourhood committees got into legal conflicts or where they were dissolved by elected council?

- One person questioned how neighbourhood committees canvas opinions in a neighbourhood and how is dissention dealt with?

- The group entered into a discussion about the concern that middle class residents' groups and homeowners tend to be better organized and therefore wield more power than some other groups. Their concern is that neighbourhood committees will reflect that inequity of power.

- One person noted that one of the keys to success for community councils will be the sense of the neighbourhood having control over what happens locally. If the neighbourhood does not have a sense of control, it will not work. This participant stressed the need for three things; a budget, an elected person and the group must have specific responsibilities.

- Many comments were made by the participants about issue-driven committees.
    - A participant felt that neighbourhood committees or councils will always be issue-driven.
    - One person said that for any type of neighbourhood structure that is created, some mechanism should make it less issue driven and make the structure so that people do not just react to things when they happen, but to understand what is going on in their area.

- The group discussed issues related to communication between city and community councils:
    - Is it city council's responsibility to inform community councils about decisions prior to making them?
    - Is there a two-way communications process between city and community councils?
    - Do community councils actually get involved early on in the planning process?
    - Is consideration given to citizens who are not equally represented?

- A comment/question was raised about the accountability of the executive of neighbourhood committees to the residents.
    - One person was concerned because they feel that if informal, non-elected neighbourhood committees are formed, it becomes hard to disband them.
    - There is an assumption that local input is always good but local politicians need to look at the bigger picture as opposed to local issues
    - Community councils will not work under the present government because there will not be significant money or resources to allow them to work effectively.

APPENDIX "D": BIBLIOGRAPHY

APPENDIX "D"

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Publications

The following books and articles were considered to some extent in the research project, including the Preliminary Research Paper on Neighbourhood Governments.

Edited collections are generally not broken down into specific articles, although where an individual author has been cited, the relevant article also receives its own entry. Specific pieces of legislation are not listed. Government reports, brochures and small scale publications are generally not listed unless they were a significant source of information

Audit Commission for Local Government Authorities and the National Health Service in England and Wales, "Phoenix Rising: A Study of New Zealand Local Government Following Reorganization," Occasional Paper No. 19, June, 1993

Ball, Rick and Jon Stobart, "Community Identity and the Local Government Review," **Local Government Studies**, Vol. 22, No. 1, Spring, 1996

Barlow, I.M., 1991, **Metropolitan Government**, London and New York: Routledge

Bennett, Robert J., (ed.), 1993, **Local Government in the New Europe**, London: Belhaven Press

Berry, Jeffrey M., Kent E. Portney and Ken Thomson, 1993, **The Rebirth of Urban Democracy**, Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institute

Birch, Eugenie L., 1996, "Planning in a World City: New York and its Communities," **Journal of the American Planning Association**, Vol. 62, No.4, Autumn, 1996,
pp. 4442-459

Bowler, Vaughn and Michael Wanchuk, 1986, **Volunteers: A History of the Largest Volunteer Organization in North America**, Edmonton: Lone Pine Publishing

Brownstone, Meyer and T. J. Plunkett, 1983, **Metropolitan Winnipeg: Politics and Reform of Local Government**, Berkeley: University of California Press

Burns, Danny, Robin Hambleton, Paul Hoggett, 1994, **The Politics of Decentralization**, Basinstoke: MacMillan

Bush, Graham, 1991, **Governing Big Cities The Management of Decentralization**, Occasional Publications No. 2, Victoria University of Wellington

Chandler, J.S., (ed.), 1993, **Local Government in Liberal Democracies: An Introductory Survey**, New York: Routledge

Chandler, J.A., 1996 (Second Edition), **Local Government Today**, Manchester: Manchester University Press

Fiske, Barbara Page (ed.), 1989, **Key to Government in Chicago and Suburban Cook County**, Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Gerecke, Kent and Barton Reid, 1992, "The Failure of Urban Government: The Case of Winnipeg" in Henri Lustiger-Thaler (ed.), **Political Arrangements: Power and the City**, Montreal: Black Rose Books

Gilbert, Richard and Don Stevenson, 1993, **Disentangling Local Government Responsibilities: International Comparisons**, Toronto: Canadian Urban Institute

Hambleton, Robin, "Reinventing Local Government--Lessons from the USA," **Local Government Studies**, vol. 22, No. 1, Spring, 1996

Hoggett, Pau. and Robin Hambleton (eds.), 1987, **Decentralisation and Democracy: Localising Public Services**, Occasional Paper 28, Bristol: University of Bristol School for Advanced Urban Studies

Judge, David, Gerry Stoker and Harold Wolman (eds.), 1995, **Theories of Urban Politics**, London: Sage

Keating, Michael, 1991, **Comparative Urban Politics: Power of the City in the USA, Canada, Britain and France**, Ladershot" Edward Elgar

King, Desmond and Gerry Stoker (eds.), 1996, **Rethinking Local Democracy**, London: MacMillan Press Ltd.

Kingsley, G. Thomas, 1996, "Perspectives on Devolution," **Journal of the American Planning Association**, Vol. 62, No.4, Autumn, 1996, pp. 419-426

Leach, Steve, Howard Davis and Associates (eds.), 1996, **Enabling or Disabling Local Government**: Choices for the Future, Buckingham: Open University Press

Lemon, James T., 1996, **Liberal Dreams and Nature's Limits, Toronto**: Oxford University Press

Local Government Policy Making, Vol. 20, N0. 4, March , 1994, Special Issue on "Decentralization: The Continuing Debate"

Lowndes, Vivien, "Citizenship and Urban Politics," in Judge, Stoker and Wolman (eds.), 1995

Lustiger-Thaler, Henri, (ed.), 1992, **Political Arrangements: Power and the City**, Montreal and New York: Black Rose Books

Martin, David L., 1990, **Running City Hall: Municipal Administration in America**, Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press

Masson, Jack, with Edward C. LeSage Jr., **Alberta's Local Governments: Politics and Democracy**, Edmonton: University of Alberta Press

New York City, The Mayor's Committee Assistance Unit, 1996, **Handbook for Community Board Members**

Norton, Alan, 1994, **International Handbook of Local and Regional Government: A Comparative Analysis of Advanced Democracies**, Aldershot, England: Edward Elgar Ltd.

O'Brien, Allan, 1993, **Municipal Consolidation in Canada and its Alternatives**, Toronto: ICURR Publications

Ontario, Government of, Bill 103, as proposed and enacted, and related backgrounders accessible via the Ontario Government Home Page

Pecorella, Robert F., 1994, **Community Power in a Post-Reform City: Politics in New York City**, New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc.

Portland, Oregon, Office of Neighborhood Associations, 1992, **Guidelines for Neighborhood Associations, District Coalitions and the Office of Neighborhood Associations**

Renaud, Jean-Pierre, 1993, **Paris, Un Etat Dans L'Etat**, Paris: L'Harmattan

Rothblatt, Donald N. and Andrew Sancton (eds.), 1993, **Metropolitan Governance: American/Canadian Perspectives**, (Vol. 1 of the North American Federalism Project) Berkeley: University of California Press

Rusk, David, 1995 (Second Edition), **Cities Without Suburbs**, Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press

Sancton, Andrew, 1991, **Local Government Reorganization in Canada Since 1975**, Toronto: ICURR Press

______________, 1996, "Reducing Costs by Consolidating Municipalities: New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Ontario," **Canadian Public Administration**, Vol. 39, N0.3, (Fall, 1996), pp. 267-289

Shand, Doug, 1993, "Citizen Participation in 'Post-Unicity' Winnipeg," Student Paper Series, Winnipeg: Institute of Urban Studies, University of Winnipeg

Sharp, Elaine B. 1990, **Urban Politics and Administration: From Service Delivery to Economic Development**, White Plains , NY: Longsmans

Sharpe, L.J., ed., 1995, **The Government of World Cities: The Future of the Metro Model**, New York: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Thomas, John Clayton, 1986, **Between Citizen and City: Neighborhood Organizations and Urban Politics in Cincinnati**, University Press of Kansas

Tindal, Richard C. and Susan Nobes Tindal, 1995, **Local Government in Canada** (fourth edition), Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd.

UK, Department of the Environment, Local Government Division, "Draft Circular on Parish Reviews" and "Draft Guidance on Consultations with Parish and Town Councils", November 18, 1996, via DOE Home Page

UK, Local Government Commmission for England, "Reviewing Local Government in the English Shires: A Report on the 1992-1995 Structural Review," 1995

UK, Local Government Commission for England, "The 1995 Review of 21 Districts in England: Overview Report," 1995

Whitehead, Alan, "Redistributing the Remains: a commentary on the 1993-94 Local Government Review," **Local Government Policy Making**, Vol 21, No. 1, July 1994

Wichern, Phil H., 1984, Evaluating Winnipeg's Unicity: Citizen Participation and Resident Advisory Groups, Research and Working Paper No. 11, Winnipeg: Institute of Urban Studies, University of Winnipeg

Wilson, David and Chris Game, with Steve Leach and Gerry Stoker, 1994, **Local Government in the United Kingdom**, London: MacMillan Press Ltd

Selected Internet Addresses

Home Pages for municipal governments referred to in this Discussion Paper :

Amsterdam	http://www.amsterdam.nl/03logo/03index.html
Boston	http://www/ci.boston.ma.us
Chicago	http://www.ci.chi.il.us
Christchurch	http://www/ccc/govt/nz/index.asp
Edmonton	http://www.gov.edmonton.ab.ca
Glasgow	http://www.glasgow.gov.uk
Halifax (provides link to text of Halifax Rggional Municipality Act)	http://www.region.halifax.ns.ca

Hamilton-Wentworth	http://www.hamiltonn-went.on.ca
Hamilton-Wentworth Constituent Assembly	http://www.freenet.hamilton.on.ca/ Information/Government/Assembly
Metro Toronto	http:www.metrotor.on.ca
New York City	http://www.ci.nyc.ny.us
Paris (Paris Pages)	http://www.paris.org/parisfull.html
Portland (provides link to Office of Neighbourhood Associations and relevant ordinances and guidelines)	http:www.ci.portland.or.us
UK Local Government (links to most cities)	http://www.local.doe.gov.uk
Winnipeg	http://www.mbnet.mb.ca/city

Other Sites

Alliance for Redesigning Government	http://www.clearlake.ibm.com/Alliance
Citistates Home Page	http://www.citistates.com
Citizens for Local Democracy (Toronto)	http://communityweb.net/citizens/
Civic Practices Network	http://www.cpn.org
Links to the World Minnisota Legislative Reference Library	http://www.library.leg.state.mn.us/lrl/links/localgov.htm
Metro Toronto New City Site	http://www.new.city~toronto.org
Planning and Architecture Internet Resource Centre (provides direct links to local governments in Canada and elsewhere)	http://www.arch.buffalo.edu/pairc